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C. C. MARTINDALE

IN GOD'S ARMY

III.

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III.

CHRIST'S CADETS

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BY

C. C. MARTINDALE, S.J.

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A

X. DE X.

Il y a déjà bien du temps que nous nous rencontrâmes sous le beau soleil de Provence, lorsque vous me racontiez des histoires de Saint-Cyr et du régiment, et me façonnicz des chansons pour me faire rire, et que je vous prônais la grise Angleterre. A peu près tout a changé depuis lors, si ce n'est l'affection que nous avons eue l'un pour l'autre. Donc, j'ai éprouvé le besoin de vous offrir un munusculum quale-cumque. *Un an auparavant, il mourrait tout près de moi dans la ville où je recommençais, pour ainsi dire, à vivre, un jeune artiste qui plus que tout autre dominait mon imagination et ma pensée. Voici ce qu' un jour, il écrivait :*

> *" I am so glad to have the life of St. John Berchmans ; it has just arrived. It will be so interesting to compare it with the life of St. Aloysius. . . . These two, with St. Stanislaus Kostka, make a very beautiful trinity, do they not ? . . .* Aubrey Beardsley."

J'avoue qu'alors je ne l'aimais guère, cette trinité, à part Saint Louis, pour lequel j'avais un culte un peu fantaisiste. . . . J'espère avoir appris à mieux les connaître. En tout cas, je les aime maintenant tous les trois. Et je vous offre ces quelques pages.

À vous, cher, de tout cœur,

C. C. M.

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ST. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA

ST. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA

1568–1591

"The life of St. Aloysius is perfectly charming: what a most lovable creature he must have been!" —Aubrey Beardsley.

Aloysius Gonzaga was born into a period of great men and great events. His entire life fell easily within the reign of Elizabeth of England: Charles IX. and Henri IV. of France and Philip II. of Spain were his contemporaries. During his boyhood St. Pius V. was Pope, and Michael Angelo was in his glory. Shakespeare broke into dramatic fame probably in the year of, or in that preceding, his death; Calvin and Knox died, Kepler and Richelieu were born, while Aloysius was living; St. John of the Cross died in the same year as he, and St. Teresa had died only nine years before.

Yet Aloysius, though a Prince, had no such title to fame as had any one of these. He was no poet, no man of science, no statesman, no military leader (though either of these latter he

had it in him to become): he headed no religious movement, whether away from orthodoxy, or of revival; he was no great ecclesiastic, no mystic theologian. His uneventful life is related, when we have said that for Christ's sake he abandoned the marquisate to which he was heir, and entered the novel and still suspected Association of the Jesuits. His claim to immortality resides nowhere if not in his character, and in the development and expression of his personality. But since the instinct of Catholics has at all times recognized in Aloysius one of our more potent intercessors, it would be perverse if this series contained no account of that character and of that personality.*

We would from the outset, then, emphasize our present intention, which is essentially not to write an historical account of Aloysius's doings, but to indicate what we believe to have been his character. In diffidently venturing upon this task (for it is no light thing to approach, to examine, and to describe the spiritual life of a Saint), we shall ever bear certain principles in mind.

A Saint is a person, not an abstract type.—Thus, it will never be forgotten that sanctity

* Aloysius is a patron of Our Lady's Sodality; but it is doubtful whether he actually belonged to it.

in the individual is a very qualified and limited possession. After all, human sanctity at best can be but a pale and limited reflex of the surpassing sanctity of Christ, and a finite participation in the infinite holiness of God. And just as any individual flower can never so develop as to outpass the limits of its species—as though violets should rival roses, or the rose the palm—so will each human soul, however far by grace or nature it be evolved, not only remain perforce within the varying limits set to humanity, even heroic, but will never annul, nor indeed disregard, those mysterious conditions and outlines of growth in which its individual temperament has moulded it. Did grace do violence to Nature, and interfere with, not assist and supplement, her workings, the result would be monstrosity—untrue, unbeautiful, and harmful.

Saints are not born perfect, but become so.—Yet not merely as violet or as rose does the human soul develop. The flowers blossom, "according to their kind," at the soft soliciting of rain and wind and sun, but unconsciously, not self-governed. The human soul must win to its fulfilment by struggle and endeavour, by choice, self-discipline, and deliberate acts. And since its perfection lies mostly in the future, it is impossible to deny that its earlier acts of

choice and effort will be less perfect than the later. They will be deficient in that wisdom and force which practice and habit and gathered grace will give; they may even, at times, be foolish, perverse, obstinate, impulsive, vacillating. It is of the last importance to remember this in the lives of those for whom their spiritual success has merited the name of Saint. The greater the Saint, the sterner the battles which must win him the diviner crown. And the fight must have been interior, or it will have been nothing. Sheer persecution will not suffice. Until a man has found and fought his enemies within him, he has not suffered.* Hence, when we relate the actions of a Saint, it would be totally false to assume they were each and all of them saintly. Very likely he said and did, and even thought and wished, many things that were foolish and awry; he moved from experiment to self-knowledge, and thus to the ever harder task of self-correction, self-development, self-sanctification. He passed from the crude thrust to the delicate adjustment; from revolt against tradition, environment, heredity, to a tender and patient reforma-

* We say this, making whatever exceptions theology may require in the case of Our Lord and of His immaculate Mother.

tion of what might be improved, or elimination (if, indeed, that be possible !) of what was incorrigible, always by way of a more equable tendency towards a goal more clearly seen, more dearly loved, more nearly reached. In the Saints, the violent will become the strong ; the fanatical, the firm : or, again, they are the indolent who become the calm ; the apathetic, the controlled. Least of all, it may be, in the life of Aloysius is everything to be regarded as equally praiseworthy ; some of it, indeed, may not be praiseworthy at all : nor may we expect that in so circumscribed a character every form of praiseworthiness is equally likely, or in any way likely, to have existed.

Hence, any determination to find a "Saint-in-the-making" admirable, at least, in all things, even if not in all things imitable, is ill-advised.

What we should imitate in a Saint.—There may be that in a Saint's life which, as we saw, should not be imitated by anybody ; there will rarely be much in it which should be imitated by everybody. The Saint is, for the general onlooker, a model. But just as the individual Saint has a character built up of elements largely peculiar to himself, so has the onlooker; and the common factors may be few. Indeed, it may be said that in *details of behaviour*, no one

individual should imitate, as a rule, any other.* For if by "imitate" we mean to "copy," the endeavour is probably futile and even harmful. We cannot cut our coats according to another man's cloth. Admirers of Byron copied his limp, and now we laugh at them. The Curate in "Candida" "imitated" the adored Vicar by tucking his umbrella under his left arm, sticking out his chin, and looking eager. Even the typist lady saw through that, and told him he was "following" no "example," but cutting a sorry figure. Aristotle and Plato, when they urged on the creative poet or craftsman to "imitate" Nature, meant, not the slavish copying of definite "natural" objects, but the straining after that ideal of which those objects were themselves but the inadequate realization; for they fell short of it, even while revealing it—so much so, that Art could be called the *correcting* of Nature.

Ideals and methods, not details of behaviour.—Thus, if one man would imitate another (and especially, we dare say, if that other be Aloysius!), he must study *his ideals and his methods*, and he must also study his own self. Thus he

* Save, perhaps, quite at the beginning, as a tyro the Latin versification may wisely copy the very tricks of his classical model.

will be able to adapt and to apply what he has learnt from his model, allowing always for the double personal equation—in the Saint and in himself—which must condition the mode in which either of the two can follow Christ. For Christian perfection means the measure possible to each man of the full perfection of Christ, Who is the adequate visible expression of God, the Perfect and Invisible. The Saints are to us partial, imperfect, limited portraits of Christ, valuable because our sloth and dulness of perception need every hint they can obtain in order to understand even the humanity of God ; and also because the Saints, who were not ignorant of sin, can tell us the better how we, sinful, may endeavour to imitate the Sinless. St. Paul, with startling emphasis, bade his converts imitate him, inasmuch as he, for his part, strove to be the imitator of Christ.

Yet will all effort of imitation be wasted, unless the one Spirit which resided in Plenitude, and not "according to measure," in the supreme Example, animate too the tentative and groping explorer into God, leading him into all truth of wit and will and existence.

It will be understood, then, if in these pages we mention no more of Aloysius's actual words

and actions than may seem necessary to justify our appraisement of his motives, his methods, his aims, and his character. These are what we are anxious to elicit, and these may form the material for individual imitation.

I

We think that we shall be right in saying that Aloysius's life was governed by his realization of the *existence and meaning of sin.* To avoid it, he adopted an extremely rigid manner of life ; he renounced his rank and career ; he entered the Jesuit Society. He supported himself in this process by continual prayer, in which he found that the Passion of Jesus Christ and the devotion to the Holy Eucharist most forcibly attracted him. He passed thus towards that whole-hearted love of God and of his neighbour which is the Christian ideal. It is in these outlines that we shall study him.

The Sense of Sin.—Is it not Mrs. Humphry Ward who has said that the root-doctrine of Catholicism is that of Sin ? Certainly of Sin, Original or Actual, modern philosophers will tolerate no word. Equally it is certain that a Catholic, looking out on human history, must

declare mankind, as a whole, to be in the world, and to come into it, other than God intended, owing to that deliberate violation of God's Law by its first representative. For Adam, owing to his organic incorporation with the race, affected by his fall the whole future of society. Moreover, a Catholic will see that each individual, be his journey never so markedly upward, will yet sin in personal act, save for God's gracious and particular intervention. With the first of these dogmas modern thought will have no traffic : the Fall never took place ; or, if it did, it was a "Fall upwards." The second it will re-state to its own good pleasure : Actual sins are but mistakes, or experiments, or invasions of the lower self, or upthrusts of the subconscious, or due to brain-storms ; they are shadows necessary to emphasize the light, discords serving to bring out the harmony. Thus repentance is to look in no way to the past, but to the future only ; we may correct, we shall not expiate ; we may make up for lost opportunities of progress, and this alone shall be our penance set to ourselves by ourselves ; for as to ourselves alone we need make confession of our crime, so none other than ourselves —apart, indeed, from law of Nature or public opinion, which become from time to time our

executioners—can be our judges. Hence brooding is bad, self-accusation morbid; we hear sermons even, and exhortations, on the "Over-emphasis of Sin."

We do not for a moment deny that a modern Catholic might, with advantage even, take up, manipulate, and modify these propositions into compatibility with his beliefs and to the interest of his spiritual development. It remains, however, that irrevocably and essentially involved with the whole Christian scheme are the dogmas of Sin, Original and Actual; the duty of Contrition; the necessity of expiation; the eternal sanctions of wrong and of right doing; and the Judgment of God.

Now, we shall not even begin to understand Aloysius Gonzaga if we do not observe that he had an exceptionally acute realization of what sin meant, and that, rightly or wrongly, he was intimately convinced that he could not possibly avoid sin if he remained in the environment in which he had been born. He perceived life as an enormous choice: it lay between temporal estate of rank and wealth and power and pleasure, and an eternity of "salvation." If he stayed where he was, he could have practically all that the world can give its favourites;

if he went elsewhere, and only so, he would gain heaven. His whole career, therefore, consisted in the substitution of one life for another; that which was ordered exclusively in the interests of eternity, and that which he conceived to obscure, and, indeed, to sacrifice eternity. Thus his life is a Flight and a Quest. He will abstain as far as may be from all that his position as heir to the Castiglione marquisate implies; he will imitate, as far as may be, all that the "religious" life connotes. Later, he will struggle against the contamination of the life he has adopted by the slightest reminiscence of the life he has abandoned; he will strive to live out to the bitterest ends of logic the new principles of existence in which he finds himself.

His Renunciation of the "World."—The tenacity the boy displayed (approve it or not, as we will) in this renunciation is astounding. To start with, he simply could not convince his relatives that he meant what he said. Again and again he had to face his father, no light thing in days when the father's authority still bulked almost superstitiously tremendous—especially in regard of the head of a family so internationally magnificent as the Gonzagas; and especially, too, when that father was on terms of such exceptional intimacy with a son

who was so sensitively aware of the confidence and affection he received.* Twice the boy ran

* Notice that Aloysius flinched. He persuaded his mother to break the news of his determination to Don Ferrante. The Marquis immediately concluded that she was trying to filch the succession for the second son, Rodolfo. But Aloysius, I believe, disapproved of Rodolfo, and preferred the younger brother Francis, who did, in fact, after Rodolfo's assassination, restore the Castiglione Gonzagas to some eminence. Yet both brothers Aloysius treated with some austerity. Francis was playing one day, hurt himself, and burst out crying. Aloysius would not let his mother pet him: "Francis," he declared, "is quite able to take care of himself." And when Aloysius was driving Rodolfo into a public declaration of his secret marriage with Helen Aliprandi, he did so with a vigour that verged upon acerbity: "I warn you, . . . I have not failed to do my duty in this matter; no, I have not failed; *et iterum*, I say, I have not failed. I repeat this three times, for you will certainly repent it if you don't do yours." Rodolfo obeyed, but answered his brother in terms which the elder considered "a mere outburst of your temper and lower emotions." Happily, Aloysius steered this and many other family quarrels with quite extraordinary skill into pacification. But immediately after his death dissensions broke out anew. Fiefs had been promised, then refused, to Rodolfo by their uncle, Don Alfonso of Castel Goffredo. Eight men from Castiglione marched on the old man's villa and murdered him. Rodolfo proceeded to Castel Goffredo and took it, but less than two years after Aloysius's death was shot there, by his uncle's vassals, as he was

away from home and had to be forced back. He was set to argue with the Father-General of the Franciscans; * with a Bishop sent by the Duke of Mantua (head of the Gonzaga clan); with Cardinal Vincent Gonzaga, of the Guastalla-Molfetta; with the Archpriest of Castiglione; and with the future Bishop of Asti, who said: "I was sent to play Devil's advocate with Aloysius; and I did it, too. But he stood firm." The Marquis, tortured with gout, was actually carried in a sedan chair to the Jesuit College in Milan, and persuaded the famous Father Achilles Gagliardi, S.J., to test, by argument, his son's "vocation." Aloysius, genuinely shaken by the subtlety and cogency of Father Gagliardi's dissuasions, hesitated for a moment. He took breath again, however, and defeated even the professional theologian. On his side he was leaving no stone unturned: in the Duchess of Mantua, daughter of Ferrante I. and aunt of the Emperor Rodolfo, he

entering a church, before the eyes of his mother and of his wife. He died, moreover, excommunicate, on a charge of coining papal money. Into so turbulent an environment was Aloysius born. Below we shall mention instances of his affection for his kindred, whom he was so bent on leaving.

* A relative. He was Don Ferrante's first cousin once removed, being son of Charles Gonzaga-Bozzoli.

found a firm ally. But delay followed delay. Don Ferrante performed undignified prodigies in his Protean efforts to free himself from his promises; but Aloysius, who had delivered an ultimatum, legally signed away his birthright on November 2, 1585.

Even now it was impossible to make folk realize that he had meant what he had done, and privileges suitable only to the position he had abdicated were thrust on him by those who should have known better. The Marquis had decided Aloysius ought to live, not in the ordinary Jesuit novitiate, but with Cardinal Vincent Gonzaga. Quaintly enough, the Marquis and the Duke of Mantua, whom he had for ally, could not settle which of the two should, in etiquette, write first to the Cardinal. This scheme then fell through. Scipio Gonzaga, Patriarch of Jerusalem, was now persuaded to ask the General that Aloysius might live in his own apartments in the Roman seminary. The General was unwilling. Don Ferrante, with incredible naïveness, now asked Aloysius himself to apply to the Duchess of Mantua to obtain this favour—the very lady who had so helped him to rid himself of his fiefs. Aloysius not unnaturally refused. This, too, fell through. Yet, even when he was installed

in Sant' Andrea, the persecution continued. Thus, at a philosophical dispute, the objicient set the lauds of Aloysius's ancestry as preface to his arguments. A doctor, sent for to feel the young man's pulse, could not do so without first praising him for his abdication. Special rooms, carriages, salutations, were forced on the unlucky youth, who asked only to be suffered to work out loyally and in quiet the line of life he had elected. This explains the sometimes quite appalling snubs he administered to his entourage. Even in his boyhood, his rather ill-managed fervour had led him to reprove where no reproof was called for, as when the boy-Prince in Madrid peevishly told the wind to stop blowing. Aloysius silenced him : our wonder is that he did not quote Canute.... But his rank helped him, then, to carry these things off.* On a famous occasion at Milan a gorgeous lady, not recognizing him in his shabby cassock, asked him if he belonged to the Brera. He was, in fact, staying there, and answered "Yes." "Alas, poor Prince Gonzaga!" she exclaimed; "to what a place has he, too, gone to bury himself!" "Madam," replied the inexorable youth, "It is not to bury himself that

* As when he snubbed an older man for indecent language.

he has gone there, but to initiate a new life. His patched clothes are less deplorable than the outrageous fashions . . ." And he relented nothing of his sermon. The horror-struck lady became, it is hinted, more discreet. Once, as his Romeward cortège passed through the famine-stricken villages of the Apennines: "How fortunate should we consider ourselves," observed a Father, "that we were not born in the lower classes!" "It's much more fortunate," rejoined the exasperated Saint, "that we weren't born Turks."

The same determination to have it understood that he was definitely off with the old life explains again many an action that seems to be trivial or affected or even ostentatious. He insisted on shabby clothes or broken shoes. He appeared in aprons, with brooms, dusting away cobwebs, and sweeping corridors, when a grandee was likely to pass by. He was fond of presenting himself at palace doors in squalid attire, begging for alms and broken meats. And since in all this he was not merely emphasizing his flight from an old and hated environment, but was pursuing a positive ideal, throughout his years with the Jesuits he sought out explicitly what was most acutely characteristic of the new way of life as contrasted with the old. His

room should not alone be poor, but the poorest; his books not only no more than were allowed, but as few as could be tolerated. When visiting his home, he made it perfectly clear that he was still, and wholly, a "religious." He refused titles; he arranged his own room; he shrank from superfluities at table; he was scrupulous to a degree as regarded such presents (warm woollen underclothing, for instance) as his devoted mother wished to give him. His whole attitude to Rodolfo was curiously blent of deference, as from a plain ecclesiastic to a grandee, or from cadet (as he now legally was) to the head of the house, and of a supremely authoritative tone of which, do as he would, he never could altogether divest himself.*

Penance.—Within each man's soul sin finds allies. To combat these and all that should make him traitor to his determination, though for many another reason too, Aloysius waged that war of penance for which he is notorious. It was, no doubt, in Mantua, in 1579, that he began to diet himself rigorously. His doctors

* Aloysius's slight discrepancies of conduct are rather amusing. It is difficult to find out what exactly was settled about his pension; but he had a kind of secretary to take his theological notes, and he obtained a special lay-brother *en permanence* as travelling companion.

told him that otherwise the disease of strangury which then attacked him would ruin his military career. He began to grow thin, for the early portrait of Aloysius playing racquets shows him as sturdy and well-set. His stomach grew weak, and he became incapable of eating normally without suffering nausea. But he continued for the love of God what he had begun from a desire to be a soldier. He added such penances as suited his temperament, and which were, in substance, familiar from the lives of the Saints. He used his dog's leash to flog his shoulders ; he wore his spurs, linked together, round his waist. He put boards in his bed, and knelt for hours upright, in his nightshirt only, and in the Lombard winter, on the stone floor of his room. He disregarded the violent headaches which his extreme weakness induced : were they not the crown of thorns he was choosing in lieu of a coronet ? And he deliberately increased their violence. The fury of his penances broke his father's spirit ; they had been his mother's strongest argument in favour of allowing him to have his own way and go to Rome. Once however in Jesuit hands, he had to regulate, and very considerably to circumscribe, this magnificent but ill-judged and perhaps ob-

stinate and perverse behaviour.* Yet here, too, silence and "custody of the eyes," maintained with violence, continued the exhaustion of brain and nervous tissue. He went for walks, but could not recognize his destination. He failed to learn the Superior's place at dinner. He refused to answer older men who addressed him for fear of violating "silence." Sent to Naples to recruit, he was treated by Superiors in regard to sleep and clothing with a negligence which seems to us little short of criminal. Utterly broken in health, he returned to Rome.† Of his wholly self-forgetting

* It is hard otherwise to describe his shirking (if, indeed, the tale and its interpretation be correct) the dancing or fencing lessons which his father ordered him to take; his rudeness to a lady with whom he did not wish to dance; his actions calculated to bring ridicule, not only on himself, but on his family and compeers; his highly personal interpretations of rule and custom, especially when he tried to impose them on others as well as on himself. Here is the creaking of a strong-knit organism not yet grown supple and adaptable, not yet lubricated (as might once have been written) with the oil of charity and of sweet reasonableness. For though, as Mrs. Craigie finely says, "No calling can be obeyed without suffering," yet, "by the exercise of self-discipline one may do much that is not repulsive only, but suicidal."

† Notice, however, that, had he not gone to Naples, Charles Spinola, his fellow-student there, would have

devotion in the service of the plague-stricken we shall speak below: true to his bent, as he lay sick, and indeed dying, he begged leave of his Superior to take the "discipline." The good man laughed, and said he was too weak to take it properly. Aloysius begged that another might administer it. The Superior reminded him of the awful penalties incurred by one who struck a cleric. . . . The matter ended in a smile.*

It is altogether false to suppose that Aloysius was an ascetic in his cradle, or that he was born with a temperament sombre, melancholy, or morbid. His boyhood wholly disproves these notions. He keenly enjoyed fine spectacles and sport. In 1578 he can give a minute account of the funeral of the Grand Duchess Joan, wife of Francis I. of Florence: "It was a very fine sight, and lasted three hours." Four months later he sees the race for St. Anne's mantle ("which was red in colour") from the

never acquired what was to be his most consoling recollection, as, previously to his martyrdom in Japan, he lay in the appalling prisons of Omura.

* Mrs. Craigie writes again: "Asceticism is a faithful quality. It is won by slow and painful stages, with bitter distress and mortifying tears; but once really gained, the losing is even harder than the struggle for its acquisition."

Grand Duke's stand. "The Count di Bagno's horse won it." This was on Sunday. Next Friday his party visited Don John, and spent the day together "cooking all sorts of things." "But Don John did not eat anything himself," as he was fasting to gain a Jubilee. (Aloysius apparently was not fasting, and did eat, and did not try to gain the Jubilee till next week.) A little later, in the Pitti garden, the Princesses "came with a number of dogs," and made them run for the mantle. "We all ran, the Princesses, Don John, and ourselves, and kept it up till evening." During this period Aloysius's accounts relate in detail his astonishingly elaborate, gorgeous, and expensive costume; he took dancing lessons; read novels; possessed "two tops with strings"; had "oil of mustard" for his chilblains, a "salve" for his stomach, and a pomade, presumably for his hair, not to dwell upon a toothpaste of dried roses and pomegranate-peel. He was also, it appears, fond of shooting birds with a cross-bow, and charged his father heavily for the presents he gave and for his gratuities, for instance, to Don John's household dwarf.

That his mind worked according to somewhat mechanical logic cannot, however, be doubted, and the extreme artificiality of his

bringing up, together with a certain unimaginative practicality, which converted principle abruptly, almost brutally, into action, fostered this. Moreover, his favourite authors, Seneca and Plutarch, clearly reinforced this layer of natural stoicism subjacent to his supernatural religion. Just as, without "vocation," Aloysius might well have become a Machiavelli, or, with poetic inspiration (of which, I think, he had no whit), a Dante, so, without Christianity, he might well have been a lesser Augustus, a sterner Plutarch, a less complaisant Seneca. "What," he asks, "is the difference between the dust of a Prince and of a pauper?" (a sentiment straight from Lucian) and it would seem he often argued out the advantages of the religious state in thoroughly utilitarian fashion (though here he approximates perhaps to his reminiscences of Aquinas). He is said to have chilled the question, whether he did not mind being seen in tattered clothes, by the conventional dilemma, If those who see me know me, they will be edified. If they do not, what can it matter to me? Yet his "apathy" was gained with difficulty. "The devil tempts you most by thoughts of vanity and self-satisfaction," he wrote, "since this is the weakest part of your soul"; and after his entry into the

noviciate it was motions alternately of complacency and despondency which he experienced. He was sensitive to criticism, and was glad to spite himself by showing, in the publicity of the pulpit, that he could not pronounce the letter *r*. One immediate consequence of this battle against "human respect" was a transparent sincerity of speech which everybody recognized. With disconcerting frankness, he asserted the thing that was; within the rather limited arena of his consciousness, he was, as we have said, singularly clear-sighted, and quite devoid here, too, of exaggerations—at least, towards the end. He saw his faults, and owned that they were exactly what he had expected of himself.

This does not imply in his case that slightly cynical contempt of self, of society, and of life which pervades all real stoicism. Indeed, his character was throughout military and sanguine. We pass over his determination, as a boy, to be a soldier; his life in the camp; his suit of diminutive armour; his theft of gunpowder during the midday siesta, when he almost got himself crushed by the recoiling gun he fired off; his alarming assimilation of the camp-fire dialect. His whole view of life was positive, as we said, no less than renun-

ciatory. His vocation was no *shirking*. Quite apart from his immature idea of entering some relaxed Order to restore its fervour, he was fired to elect the Society of Jesus largely owing to the tales of its unimagined missionary success which came blazing from the East. New Empires with fantastic names ; ambassadors to Italy of outlandish garb and exotic physiognomy and chattering tongue ; the career of Xavier, and narratives of arduous toil and romantic perils on faery seas and the kaleidoscope of miracle, kindled his imagination and made of him, in spirit, a Raleigh or a Drake. Martyrdom flamed on his horizon. Algerian cruisers pursue Admiral Doria's fleet with which Aloysius is returning from Madrid, and the lad exults in the prospect of high adventure and of hard blows struck and suffered for the Lord.*

* Another reason for his choice was the vow made by the Society to accept no ecclesiastical dignities. Thus only could he escape the magnificent Church titles and benefices—no less irksome, and more dangerous and hampering than any worldly honour—which his rank would have made inevitable had he been capable of accepting them. It is pleasant to recall the great discretion and propriety which marked all the action of the Jesuit Superiors with regard to this somewhat alarming postulant ; while the letters of the Marquis, on his side, to the General are the perfection of dignity, courtesy, and high feeling.

We have spoken hitherto chiefly of the natural, almost the material, substructure of Aloysius's life ; but we have said ample to indicate the ruthless clarity of vision and the extraordinary tenacity of purpose which were his. When his duty became clear, he could set his face like flint against resistance. Heredity, by a strange reversal of destiny, turned in his case against the iron Gonzaga race which had supplied him with the masculinity of his soul.

II

Prayer.—But in the Christian life no man can hope, or will wish, to stand alone. Rock though his human character may be, yet will he necessarily cement himself to the ultimate and fundamental reality, God. This he must do by prayer. One of the permanent miracles in the life of Aloysius was his total distrust of his own reliability and sufficiency, and his supreme conviction that from God alone could he derive the strength, no less than the light, he needed.

In this he got but little assistance from his fellows. Even the best of mothers, at that day, seem to have been rather helpless to instruct their children in what appear to us the rudiments of direct intercourse with God.

However, by the time Aloysius was five years old, Donna Martha had taught him to recite a number of book-prayers. He did this kneeling on the floor; and, by an instinct of reverence, even when ill, he disliked praying as he lay in bed. He begged one of his mother's maids to help him to sit upright. Even in Florence, when, at the age of ten, he made his vow of purity, he still had no knowledge of what is called "mental prayer." Only after his illness (1580), and after his resolution to become a religious, he learnt to use the Life of Christ and the rich thought of God as subject-matter for reflection and as source of spiritual power. Such at least are the dates which a mechanical history can assign to a spiritual process independent of mere years. He was much helped by the sober and robust "meditations" of Peter Canisius. Luis de Granada was another writer from whom he avowedly derived great assistance; this was in Madrid, and he used thenceforward (1583) to take a special hour each day for his "meditation," withdrawn, for quiet's sake, in a shed where firewood was stacked. We hear much of the "consolations" he received during these communions with God, which became, so to say, incessant, and of the tears he shed when

the true meaning of the Divine penetrated his soul; but there was nothing sickly or sentimental about his devotion. Canisius and Luis de Granada are strong food; and it was in the Psalms, in such writers as Augustine, Bernard, and, indeed, Aquinas, that he was to find his favourite material. Moreover, it is remarkable that, despite the quite abnormal power of concentration he developed, he could definitely assert that he never found introspection or absorption in prayer to interfere at all with his external avocations.

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But we shall have said nothing about his spiritual and supernatural life unless we consider his marked preoccupation with the memory of the Passion and with the Holy Eucharist.

His Devotion to the Passion.—It is impossible to exaggerate the part played in Aloysius's development by the Crucifix. Quite apart from the general motives we have mentioned, the thought of the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ inspired and governed the boy's life of self-inflicted penance. It seemed to him intolerable that he, for whose sake the Son of God, "being rich, had become poor," should live in luxury: a coronet seemed an insult to the memory of that other Crown. The lash

cut the sharper into his shoulders when the brief words reminded him that Pilate "took Jesus and scourged Him." Constantly Aloysius turned his mind to the saving Death, most of all on that veiled day which, week by week, recalls Good Friday. In quite tiny incidents he would detect some hint of its memory, as when red flecks on a pebble he picked up on the beach spoke to him constantly (for the child treasured it) of the blood then shed. Travelling, he would seek in the inns he entered for a Crucifix ; not finding one, he would score a cross upon white paper with charcoal he took from the stoves. Later he wore a cross always under his tunic. He had copied for him the meditations on the Passion made in a retreat at Mantua in 1585. They were to help him in that last phase of his contest upon which he knew himself then to be entering. The Crucifix before which he had always prayed at home * was constantly in his dying father's hands ; his own he bequeathed, himself dying, to his closest friend, Guelfucci. Every noon he placed himself, in thought and love, on Calvary. As he lay on his death-bed the Crucifix was in his hands, until, too weak to hold it, he surrendered it to be hung before him on the wall.

* It is still at Castiglione.

But the true image of the Crucified was to be himself. It was evening, and the suddenly chilled air of Rome might be feared for the sick man. When, therefore, the Provincial at his side saw Aloysius pluck anxiously at the cap he was wearing, he folded the restless hands, and replaced the cap. "*He* died," the young man whispered, "with nothing on his head. . . ." But no one could believe that the Saint was dying, though throughout the day he had insisted that he was sure to pass that night. The infirmarian told all, even Bellarmine, Aloysius's confessor, to retire. "He is no more likely to die," repeated he, "than you are." Two Jesuits, one of them Guelfucci, stayed in the sick-room. Guelfucci shaded the lamp, and from time to time approached the bed; but Aloysius was always wide awake and praying. Twice or thrice his friend asked him if he wanted anything. "Watch with me," he answered always; "I am dying." But even now no one could believe him.* Suddenly an incident of incredible pathos happened. The sick man, who throughout

* So, too, St. Ignatius Loyola could not win belief when he said he was dying, and died, in fact, alone. St. Francis Xavier when he died in the hut on the seashore of San Chan had with him only a Chinese boy, and one other, whose unhappy end he already could foresee.

his life had unflinchingly exacted of his body that it should do as he commanded, and that it should be nailed, as far as human will might order it, with Christ upon a Cross, now begged that he might be turned from his right side to his left. It was found afterwards that two deep bed-sores had been caused by his long illness. He had said nothing of them till now, but at the last he begged to be eased of their pain. But the marks of death upon his face had become plain to read. Guelfucci dared not lift him. "Be patient," he said. "Drink this last drop of your chalice." Such was the answer to the Saint's sole human cry of thirst. Three companions were now present, and the murmur of their prayers was round him. He grasped the deathbed candle firmly, the symbol of his faith and love. With the other hand he pressed the smaller Crucifix upon his breast, and fixed his eyes on the great Crucifix, black on the wall before him. On it his eyes remained, for, having uttered "Jesus," Aloysius died. He was twenty-three years old, three months, and eleven days.

The function fulfilled in Aloysius's life by the influence of this devotion was less, we believe, that it stimulated him to greater penance and renunciation than that it trans-

ported, once and for all, his attention from an *idea* to a *Person*, and from himself to Jesus Christ. That it did this implies that he used it exactly as he should, for we need not hesitate to acknowledge that there may easily exist an ill-regulated "devotion" to the Passion. It is possible to remain, as a Saint has said, on the surface of that sea, and to consider only Christ's physical and exterior sufferings; it is conceivable even that such consideration may minister to a perverted appetite for the violent and horrible. But it is further possible to regard the whole Passion of our Lord out, as it were, of perspective.

This is difficult, perhaps, to state accurately, and so as to avoid misunderstanding. Yet in a true sense the Passion must ever be a secondary devotion. Christianity neither begins nor stops on Calvary. For the Passion is entirely dependent on the Incarnation, and, as essentially, it looks towards the Resurrection. Without the Incarnation the Passion could never have been; but the Incarnation might well have taken place, they tell us, without the sequel of the Passion. And even when the eternal wisdom of God decreed that the great Restitution of mankind should be consummated only on and by the Cross, the accessories

of that Sacrifice, so to name them, the whole human history on which contemplative souls devoutly feed, remain no essential element in the Divine plan. They are only permitted by the indescribable tenderness of the Father and by the utter unselfishness of the redeeming Son, for our instruction and example—our instruction, that we might learn how terrible is the sin in which we freely plunge our soul; how complete the self-emptying of the Eternal Son who came to do away with it; how sublime the destiny which should warrant the paying of so large a price: our example, that we might set no limit in our response to Him who for our sakes shrank from no most terrible detail in what human nature holds most terrible of all.

Thus we should not isolate our meditations on the Passion, nor limit off that history as if it were complete in itself. Rather is it the climax chapter of but one part of a far vaster history, which reaches from eternity to eternity, and tells how God took human nature to make, of that human nature, a "participator in the Divine substance." He became Son of Man, that we might be made sons of God. Here St. Paul is perhaps our best model. Paul had a genius for seeing things imperially—in their minutest detail as in their universal

issues. Thus did he scan that heathen empire to which he felt himself allotted as Apostle. Thus did he regard the whole history of man—as created in grace and for glory, as fallen, as redeemed and to be restored to his first destiny. And thus, though he could say, "I preach Christ, and Him crucified"; "I knew nought among you save Christ, and Him crucified"; "God forbid that I should boast, save in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ," yet in his comprehensive vision was held not alone the Man who had been "placarded" (he boldly cries) before us crucified, but also the Eternal Son, from all ages one with God, and to all ages to reign in that joy for which, when it was set before Him, He had endured the Cross, despising the shame. And with Him was to reign incorporate that Plenitude of His true self, the Church, bought at an infinite cost for a triumph which should equally be infinite.

Aloysius might thus be caught up, by a profound realization of the place Christ's death should hold in a Christian's scheme, into a sphere of gigantic ideas and ideals, concentrated and rendered human in a Personality of incredible charm and pathos. This partly mystic, partly practical spirituality was en-

sured and perfected, we shall now see, by his devotion to the Eucharist.

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His Devotion to the Eucharist.—Aloysius is often painted in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, and, indeed, from the moment of his First Communion on June 22, 1580, his fervour towards it never faltered.* Later he will divide the week — for he communicated weekly — into three days of retrospect and three of preparation. On the eve of his Communion, grace was upon his lips;

* The picture of that event by Francis de Cairo in San Fedele at Milan is an "ideal" painting (*e.g.*, it includes Don Ferrante, who, as a matter of fact, was not present), but it is highly realistic too, and taken from Gonzaga portraits. Charles Borromeo, a relative of Aloysius (for the Cardinal's sister married Don Cæsar Gonzaga Guastalla), is giving the boy Communion. Marked and tired as it already is, the face of the young Prelate has the same spirituality shining through it as has the boy's more delicate profile—a spirituality which somehow seems to animate even the cruder portraits of Aloysius. The Marchioness, with eager, fluttering hands, the tears near her eyes, kneels close behind her son. The Marquis is beside her in armour, and more restrained—his hair is close-cropped (like Aloysius's in portraits where one feared this feature was meant merely to edify. Clearly it was a fashion). Noticeably, the eyes of all, even of the small excited Rodolfo, are fixed, not on Aloysius, but on the Host.

he entered by anticipation into the joy of his Lord; it was a privilege, even for Priests who daily sat down with Christ at His table, to be with him and hear him speak, if possible, of "to-morrow." There are tales of the irrepressible energy of his desire which would set him—forgetful of his habitual gravity of gait—running down the corridors which led to the chapel. When he was forbidden to concentrate his thought in prayer—lest his exhausted brain should be unequal to the effort—he would constantly enter the tribune of the chapel, genuflect before the Blessed Sacrament, and swiftly retire, lest the spell of the Tabernacle should chain him there. Nor is it wonderful that, after such a life, Christ should Himself deign, on that darkening evening of June 20, 1591, to be carried through the passages of the gloomy Roman college to Aloysius's poor room, and there, with the Master whose suffering death he was so soon to imitate, the disciple celebrated his own Last Supper.

Now, just as the robust, and, indeed, almost hard, elements in Aloysius's character had sufficed to exclude any mere sensuous quality in his preoccupation with the Passion, so was it precisely this devotion to the Eucharist which prevented it from being merely reminiscent—a

tender and reverent commemoration of what happened centuries ago in a distant Palestine—and, above all, from being an isolated thing, divorced from the Christian scheme as a whole.

On the one hand, no one can exclude the Passion from the Eucharist. Sacrifice enters into the occasion, manner, and intention of its institution, and into its whole history. Not only is the one Sacrifice of the Cross eternally offered in the Mass, but the whole life of Christ beneath the sacramental appearances is a life veiled, silent, and bound as it were with grave-clothes. And His presence there tends towards Communion, which is the true complement, if not the root and principle of sacrifice. The Priest ascends Calvary when he mounts the altar-steps. At their head the Sacrifice is offered. He descends them to distribute the Body and Blood of the Victim, showing forth, throughout, Christ's death "until He come." Thus for Aloysius the Passion became, through the Blessed Sacrament, an event of his own day, re-enacted before his eyes, and a present factor in his life.

But in the Blessed Sacrament is contained not alone the Passion, nor even the Incarnation merely, but the whole mystery of Christ and Christianity. For while it is indeed the

Communion in His death, even more fully may it be acclaimed the Living Bread—Bread which contains, and gives, and is itself the Life. Here we have the whole range of mysteries which we know as Grace, Charity, Incorporation with Christ, Indwelling of the Spirit, the "divinization" of man. For to be a Christian means neither more nor less than to have in us a new and supernatural way of living, transcending wholly our natural life, yet already implanted in it and lifting it on to a higher plane where, in heaven, that life shall find its fulness. This means that the soul is so knit up into unity with Christ's self, that there is no one-hood with which that unity may be compared save Christ's own union with the Father. It was Christ's will that primarily by the Eucharist—which *is* Himself—that union should be effected. By receiving it, we enter into vital union with Him, and thus "participate in the divine nature" itself.

Thus in the practice of the Eucharist all Christianity is included. It implies that death (to the disintegrating, separative, nihilistic power of Sin) which is given in Baptism, Faith, Repentance. It brings with it—nay, *is*—the Eternal Word lowered to man's estate and even lower. It carries forward into each

man's present life the Cross ; and it preserves and fosters that supernatural grace-life which is the germ of glory, invisibly unfolding itself in each human life. Sin and grace, sacrifice and triumph, repentance and purity, Bethlehem, Calvary, and Heaven — all this is essentially connected with it, and from none of these could the mind of Aloysius be, even temporarily, estranged.

III

It will need but few words to indicate what we think to have been in great part the product of this life in Aloysius, though doubtless God's gifts antecede and are to a great measure independent of personal activity. The three characteristics we refer to are his extraordinary purity, and his love for God and for his fellowmen.

His Purity of Life. — This first characteristic was, we need hardly observe, a positive and not a negative virtue. At his epoch, in his circumstances of rank and tradition, it could not possibly be otherwise ; and in few souls, perhaps, are ignorance and innocence more strongly differentiated. Even the expressions he had learnt and used, not understanding them, in camp, he soon did under-

stand, and was too shy to mention them at first in confession.* At the Annunziata, in Florence, when he was ten years old, he made his vow of perpetual chastity, though in obedience, even then, to the instinctive vital suggestions of grace rather than to the dictate of informed reason. Yet, beside that altar of Mary, many souls have since seemed to breathe a rarefied and spiritual atmosphere strangely at variance with the world's grosser exhalations. Aloysius led a life of constant care and precautions, many of which appear to us exaggerated and unhealthy. But divergence of behaviour in him and ourselves need not necessarily condemn him. "A fool," Mrs. Craigie writes, "can give more reason for his folly than a Saint can urge for his wisdom. We have five senses, but only one conscience." His surroundings constituted one long temptation; and, anyhow, he probably knew what was best for himself. Again and again we realize that his self-knowledge was wonderfully accurate and free from the distortions of morbid introspection.†

* Meschler, "St. Aloysius Gonzaga," English translation, p. 30.

† Of most of his behaviour we scarcely dare to judge; much, we believe, has been misjudged. We laugh at his refusal to allow his valet to remove his

That he was worlds away from prudery is emphasized by his amazingly frank and firm management of Rodolfo's secret marriage, which he, like everybody else, believed to be no marriage. He behaved charmingly to his sister-in-law directly he found out that she was really such, though previously he had tried in the most approved manner to arrange, with his mother, a more suitable match for the young Marquis. He wanted Rodolfo to marry

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stockings. Was that, indeed, ill-calculated "modesty"? I believe it was rather part of his general marked dislike for being waited on by valets at all. It is amply conceivable that Aloysius—at least in his experimental stage, when liberty was still a thing to be fought for—may have acted with unjustifiable coldness towards his mother. But is not his often-quoted refusal to look her in the eyes due really to the rigid code of etiquette then prevalent? So, too, St. Ignatius, in his "Rules of Decorum," directs that one conversing with men in superior position should look, not in their eyes, but below them. Of his tender affection for his mother there is happily no doubt. Many a letter, stiff, of course, in form, but exquisitely tender in spirit and thought, bears witness to it. He hated dinner-parties, but would always escort her to them and fetch her home again. Like many boys, he had no taste for feminine society in general, or for dancing; and who shall tell that it was not a boyish shyness, or temper, or dislike for "softness," that made him refuse to kiss a girl playmate's shadow as a forfeit?

a daughter of Count Troilus of San Secondo. Unluckily, she was about to be affianced to a brother of a certain Cardinal who was a great friend of Cardinal della Rovere, Aloysius's relative. This was awkward. "Take no positive steps," he wrote, however, "but allow matters to work themselves out." For he was speculating on the girl's breaking off these negotiations on her own account, as she did not want to marry into the south, being herself a northerner; and this, the wise youth pointed out, was all in favour of the Lombard Marquis Rodolfo.*

Anyhow, partly in consequence of Aloysius's way of life, and certainly its justification, was that amazing self-control which made so perfect a harmony not only of his physical instincts, but also of his imagination, his judgments, and his desires, and which left his will so royally supreme, and his spirit so com-

* Between Mantua and Bologna Aloysius and his lay-brother, James Borlasca, came to an inn where the landlord, not guessing the high birth of the shabby religious, refused them a bed apiece. The others must be reserved for "gentlemen" who might yet arrive. The lay-brother was indignant, and asked if the landlord took them for tramps. "Probably," answered Aloysius; "for that is exactly what we are;" and he prepared to submit. But no one did arrive, so the lay-brother's anxiety was appeased.

pletely free. It were, of course, childish to put down Aloysius's stainlessness of life merely to his abstinence and penance. Doubtless these helped, but they might just as probably have hindered. Aloysius ran grave risks. An exasperated nervous system is the worst substratum for a psychical equilibrium. Nor shall we assign his serenity of imagination merely to his rigid "custody of eyes," nor even to his violent concentration when at prayer, though here again, doubtless, these factors were among the material preludes to, or concomitants of, the heavenly gift. Doubtless, too, the unstimulated fancy and the intellect resentful of any but a narrow range of theorems, facilitate the fastening of thought to the object of its choice. Yet to avert the gaze from outward things often induces a morbid introspection with its appalling danger of perspective vitiated, focus destroyed, and consequent moral obliquity or paralysis. What force will then be adequate to exorcise the devils that grin suddenly in the brain, when each new cerebral effort establishes more firmly the mania of fixed ideas, or when the tissue, refusing its vibrations, allows the soul to subside into sheer will-lessness ? Are they wrong, who diagnose in Aloysius the preliminary symptoms of brain-anæmia ?

However that may be, after the briefest possible irritations, the synthesis of his self was, as we said, established, and the imperial power which transfused, co-ordinated, and governed the whole was, here as ever, God's grace. We repeat, in what measure God permits man so to merit, Aloysius merited this gift. He appreciated his own character and his circumstances of all but insuperable difficulty, as we, at our distance, and dull of intuition, can scarcely do. This is why he adopted the simple but efficacious measures of abstention and self-conquest of which we read. But it may be confidently stated, there are few men indeed who can renounce, or ought to dare to try to renounce, the terrific drama of human passion, unless they more than replace it by the transcendent love of God and of their fellow man in God. In God, we say, for the tepid atmosphere of philanthropy is useless as substitute for that furnace-breath. Aloysius was no mere regulated organism devoid of ill impulses : he was not sexless, and he was not stupid : his career was not just blameless, empty of moral lapse, white because colourless, clean because cloistered. " Blessed are the pure in heart, *for* they shall see God " ; but " We shall be like God, *for* we shall see Him as He is."

Here is no vicious circle, but, if you will, a right saintly spiral. By necessary ascents the pure in heart rise to a greater perception of God's beauty, and, from each new perception to a deeper participation in his Holiness. Aloysius's eyes looked earthward mostly ; but his heart was so turned towards God, and his soul's eye so clear and steady, that in him grew daily that substantial purity which is a positive perfection, a likeness to God, a sharing in God. Even in his ill-drawn portraits we can feel how truly the Saint's body had become the temple of the Spirit, so spiritual are they. More and more, as we study his development, we see how Christ became incorporate with him.

And we are the surer of this when we reflect that the negative can exert no influence. But true Purity is essentially purifying. Celibacy is barren, Chastity rich in power. And Aloysius, across long centuries, has purified, like a ray of creative light, the plague spots of a sick world. Love, then, in him was not slain ; but he aspired to a wedlock closer than that of flesh, or of soul with human soul.

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His Self-Devotion to his Neighbour.—There are floating traditions which suggest that Aloysius was unamiable, and indeed at times

repellent. Such is, indeed, the penalty of sensitiveness, austerity, of isolation in ideal and tendency, and of being on the defensive. Both before and after his admission to the Society there are disturbing tales of people who were afraid to speak to him "because he looked so holy." A charming anecdote, which we have never succeeded in tracing to its source, tells us how, one hot day, Aloysius was too ill to come to the Jesuit country-house. "The Censor is not coming," exclaimed one young Jesuit. "We shall be able to have some fun." It is said that this spontaneous and fresh-minded youth was afterwards martyred in a savage African mission. These things make us fear for Aloysius's reputation. It is hard to love a Saint you cannot like. Of course, his biographers expatiate on his amiability, as how should they not? But we feel constantly that we only have their word for it. . . . But they are to be trusted, we believe, more than seems at first sight probable.

It is, to begin with, certain that the boy's father not only loved him tenderly, but clung to him and was proud of him, and trusted him intimately. Certainly he esteemed him high above Rodolfo. The precocity of this elder

son, noticeable even among swift-maturing southerners, enabled the Marquis to use him as confidential secretary, and to entrust to him, when himself incapacitated by gout, those letters dealing with his losses at cards which he did not wish to show to his hired letter-writers. It is remarkable, too, that men like the Duke of Mantua, higher even in rank and family grade than Aloysius, listened with attention and deference to his wishes; while great ladies, like the Empress herself, were glad to give him their best help, not attracted certainly by any charms in him proper to the petted page; while—for after all he was a boy—the obduracy of the adult male, impervious to feminine graces, had not yet developed its normal power to fascinate and quell.*

* It is pleasant to observe that Aloysius, after his death, was particularly agreeable to relatives and fellow-religious in the matter of miracles. When his mother fell ill and received the Last Sacraments after witnessing the assassination of Rodolfo, Aloysius appeared to her and cured her. He worked miracles on behalf of his niece, Cynthia Gonzaga, a nun, and of another niece, Joan, daughter of Francis, whom he saved (together with her pet dog) in a carriage accident; of his old nurse and his valet more than once. Twice he cured the Duke of Mantua of gout. He also appeared to his sister-in-law Helen, who had a great devotion to him (after Rodolfo's death she married

Here, then, we are to recognize no mere precocity, but, as in Aloysius's whole life, a startlingly well-balanced prudence, and not a flimsy power of imitating behaviour unsuited to his age.

It is striking, too, how the villagers and dependents of his estates seem to have loved and regretted him with no merely official fervour. He was perfectly mobbed on his leaving or arriving at Castiglione. Children, the sick, the ill-behaved, the servants, were alike brought under his spell. His brothers in religion, at the end at least, were glad to have him with them, and recognized how fond they had become of his undemonstrative thoughtfulness when they saw how great a gap his death created.

Indeed, he seems to have been gifted with the sweet human power of winning the hearts of individuals. He loved to have with him certain friends; he asked first for one lay-brother, Borlasca, as his personal attendant, then for another, Salombrini. He made intimate friends with some three or four* of

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another Gonzaga), and announced her approaching death. In life, too, his letters reveal him as most charming to his tutor.

* As far as quite casual allusions and letters allow us to judge.

his companions in the short space of some six years; and that is perhaps as much as a character which is deep, and therefore slow in its self-giving, can allow itself. And he may be called fortunate, who has one so devoted in his thoughts and prayers and companionship as Antonio Guelfucci seems to have been. The older men, too, of his family, especially Cardinals della Rovere and Scipio Gonzaga, were constantly at his bedside during his last illness—the latter, himself sick, insisting on being carried in a litter almost daily to see his favourite nephew. He emphasized the blank Aloysius's death would leave in his own life. "I carry away from his bedside," he would repeat, "a heart high with inspiration, but a mozetta soaked in tears!" As touching an episode as any is Aloysius's dying visit to the aged Father Corbinelli, himself dying. They had always been fond of one another, and in their illness had constantly sent messages backwards and forwards by the infirmarian. But when the end was imminent, Father Corbinelli insisted that Aloysius should be carried to his room, and there he begged from his spiritual son a blessing. The young man struggled hard against what seemed to him an impropriety. At last, yielding to the per-

suasion of the brother, folding his hands, "May God bless us both," he said, and sprinkled the aged priest with holy water. Soon after, Aloysius thrice dreamed that Father Corbinelli had repaid that visit, standing at his bedside and imploring prayers, with promise of a speedy reunion. Aloysius woke, harassed by the obsession which he could not throw off; but in that night Father Corbinelli had died. Within three weeks the younger man had followed him.

Always he had liked to visit the sick in the infirmary; and it is a pride to recollect that in the appalling pestilence of 1591 Aloysius not only obtained a quantity of clothes for the poor from home, but himself served with enthusiasm in the hospitals of San Sisto and of Sta. Maria della Consolazione—places, in those days, of indescribable horror. It was seen that at first the very sight of ulcer or of wound made him white and sick; but he sought out the worst cases, and flinched from no most painful service. Later it was realized that the first germs of that illness which induced his fatal fever and collapse were implanted while he carried on his shoulders a fainting man, plague-stricken, from the roadside. Levite as he was, he did not "go by on the other

side," but willingly gave up his life for his friend, than which "no man hath greater love."

To follow Christ, who loved men and wills that we should love them, it may be necessary to "hate" father, mother, brothers or sisters. In the struggle to conquer self, and the enemy without, and the traitors within the soul, Christ's soldier may grow scarred and stern and grim to the indolent eye. We shall never contend that Aloysius at any period of his life had that bright attractiveness of—shall we say—St. Stanislaus, the merriment of St. Philip, the gentle courtesy of St. Francis of Sales; yet beneath his necessary and conventional cuirass, his heart beat with a poignant and profound affection for his fellows. It may have been an additional regret to the many of which he was conscious, that he found it hard—that he was *made* to find it hard—to express and expand in that affection.

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His Love of God.—We must finish this short study by acknowledging, without further analysis, that the motive and the consummation, and the continual explanation of Aloysius's life was the love of God. This astounding miracle must be recognized, that the human

soul can be in love with God as truly as with one of its fellow-creatures. When a man loves a woman he will wish to be with her; he will think of her and write to her, and avoid in himself what would displease her if he be absent; he will carry himself with affection and respect to her friends and relatives for her sake, and in general, he will order his life in relation to her. All this the most rigorous intelligence will approve. But if his love be passionate and absorbing, he will experience and perform much that not intellect dictates. His centre of gravity shifts itself; his world revolves round a new axis; his perspective is not what it was. Indeed, he will no longer see, nor judge, of things according to their objective value merely, but will correct his vision, unconsciously, by his love. He will eliminate with a charming arbitrariness all obstacles, be they persons or plans, to the convenience of the beloved; between himself and his occupation, or business, or pleasure, her vision will insinuate itself, or at least her thought will be present to him as an undertone in all the noises of his life. He will feel time empty when he is not doing something, even useless, for her; he will like to suffer, even causelessly, on her account; and if she be

suffering, it will seem criminal to be at ease. Places, phrases, names, persons will be transfigured; he will keep letters and objects which have long served their purpose and might well be discarded, but have become relics, and need a shrine. Separation seems intolerable, and delay a confusing cruelty. He is not himself; his personality is modified, transposed, reduplicated.

We shall not apply our illustration in any sort of detail to the life of Aloysius. When, however, we have said that this boy led a life in every point surpassing human averages—in his horror of sin; his determination to abandon one way of life, normally sought after, for another normally abhorred; his ruthless treatment of his body, and his extreme development of spiritual faculties; his preoccupation with the distant Death on Calvary and with the Life—seed of Resurrection—present on the altar; his stainless chastity, even of thought, and his unlimited self-sacrifice, even unto death—is there any *easier* explanation of all this than that he was in love with God?

This granted, we shall have explained no less his eccentricities, his exaggerations, his coldnesses, his angers, his isolations, his obstinacies, all that else were unaccountable.

The genius, the lover, and the Saint are each, indeed, wholly unaccountable to the uninspired if he be not aware of the lack in himself of that spirit which governs them. Utterly impossible is it to succeed in rationalizing a Saint. Not tame, nor vulgar, nor pretentious, nor conventional are Saints. Even the human great are recognized by us as having their own canons of behaviour. Kings, we half confess, cannot be judged by customary standards. So of those Princes of God, whose souls, in fact, do soar so high above our own that in all ultimate matters we shall refuse to judge them. We shall not criticize, nor pity, nor patronize. We shall do our humble best to understand, if thereby we shall find new strength and companionship for our own path. But where the Distributor of celestial gifts has joined His supreme riches in one soul, we shall ask at least His grace to understand and imitate what elements in them we may, and trust that the power which belongs to Aloysius, now that he is made one with the Source of Power, may involve even our pusillanimity in its sweep.

ST. STANISLAUS KOSTKA.*

"O feel-of-primrose hands, O feet
That want the yield of plushy sward,
But you shall walk the golden street,
And you house and unhouse the Lord."

GERARD HOPKINS.

STANISLAUS KOSTKA was a Polish Prince born in September, 1550. His father, John Kostka, was an enormously wealthy and influential noble, whose estate, named Rostkov, was in

* Although it is not clear that St. Stanislaus, any more than St. Aloysius, was a member of the Sodality, yet with as true an instinct as it displayed in the case of Aloysius, the Sodality has chosen him for patron and model. In the following pages we shall keep a little more closely to the outline of the Saint's life than we did when studying St. Aloysius. In obedience, however, to the character of this Series, we shall try to indicate the general tendencies governing his actions, and the ideals inspiring his life, rather than to emphasize those details which should find their place in a satisfactory biography. That an author prepared for the *labor improbus* of requisite research, and endowed with true sagacity in choice and happi-

ST. STANISLAUS KOSTKA

the Duchy of Masovia, whose capital is Warsaw. This duchy had been kept so free of Lutheranism that there were no heretics to be found in it as inhabitants. Neither were their professed antagonists, the Jesuits, yet to be found there. It was their order that Stanislaus was to join. He was to live in it ten months, and then to die in his eighteenth year. That is all; yet it is his name alone which keeps alive any knowledge of the Kostka family, though at that time one of quite the most important of its nation. Though the boy's father was never actually King, yet a relative of his gained many votes when Stephen Bathory of Transylvania was, as a matter of fact, elected to the throne. He was allied by blood to many royal houses. He was involved in that network of alliances which is connected with the Gonzaga clan. He was in constant association, for political or social reasons, with all the great men of his country. His family had held posts of supreme distinction for generations. His wife's family, the Kriskas, was scarcely less pre-eminent.

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ness of interpretation, may soon be found, is our earnest hope. Meanwhile we have made use only of the ordinary documents.

I

Into these circumstances of feudal and almost barbaric magnificence Stanislaus was therefore born, the second of his parents' children. The parish church of St. Adalbert at Prasnicz, where he was baptized, was ruined by the Cossacks ; but a priest, Albert Kurek, who was then thirty-one years old, and gave his evidence in 1629, when he had reached the amazing age of one hundred and ten years, was present at the baptism, and tells how Andrew Radzanovski, the godfather, took the baby from the font to the altar, and there laid it on the floor before the Blessed Sacrament.

Of his boyhood, however, little is related save in terms of those pious generalities which reminiscent affection will dictate. It is pleasant, though, to hear his brother Paul insist that Stanislaus was *braver* than the rest of his turbulent young brothers. A noble's education was of a rough-and-ready sort, and one part, we cannot but feel, was likely enough to be neutralized by the next. Thus, the tutor, John Bilinski, was ordered to be particularly strict with the boys—a behaviour very out of keeping with his own temperament, as he proved clearly afterwards, and

responsible, no doubt, for much inequality of treatment and uncertainty of touch. It was, too, ordered that punishment should be meted out freely to the children, and at the same time a huge staff of servants prevented their moving a finger for themselves. Luxury and self-indulgence were decried during the day, and at night the boys and their sister would be present at noisy dinner-parties, where the conversation became broad and the jokes scurrilous enough. We are glad to be able to mention this, for it serves to show that the innocence of Stanislaus, which we shall emphasize, was of a hardy growth, and had flourished by no means in a hot-house atmosphere. His father used to laugh at his discomfort when the talk jarred upon him; and if it reached an acute stage, he would jokingly beg the guests to keep their stories till later, else Stanislaus would faint.*

* I repeat, this anecdote is interesting because it shows well the entourage in which Stanislaus and his brother Paul grew up, and the combination of robust Catholic faith with the easy-going characteristics of a man of the world in John Kostka. As an edifying story destined to emphasize the precocious sensitiveness of Stanislaus, it is not only, perhaps, rather unpleasant, but almost unintelligible. It is difficult to get behind the vague and rhetorical Latin, and to guess what really used to happen. It is incredible that if Stanislaus were indeed in the habit of falling

I cannot refrain from picturing to myself Stanislaus, during this period, galloping about on his pony over broad fields gay with buttercups and the other flowers of childhood, under a wind-blue sky where clouds are voyaging tempestuously, while the river is ruffled into spray; or else, while the dawn still hangs golden in the mists, running down through the sparkling dew to bathe. This is not sheer romanticism. Stanislaus has a real affinity with these things, and with birds, and deer, or with anything that is swift, and musical, and graceful, and belongs to the morning, to spring, and to the open air. He is often

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from his chair in a faint, his father should have treated this rather alarming symptom as a joke. If he really believed it to be a miraculous ecstasy, to joke about it would seem almost equally out of place, and, indeed, John would have been far too frightened to jest. I do not dream, need I say, of placing limits to the richness of God's special graces of purity in the young, nor of denying an even natural instinct which may carry refined temperaments, with disgust, from the evil they "sense," but do not understand. Indeed, I firmly believe this instinct, symptomatic of an amazing spiritual and moral health, to have been present in Stanislaus to a high degree. There is enough, then, in this story which we can understand, and which, from within and from without, illuminates the boy's character.

grouped with Aloysius Gonzaga and John Berchmans, and for this there is no doubt some reason; yet three more different personalities it would be hard to picture.* Here I will make no comparison between Stanislaus and the Belgian boy, but it will set us, at the outset, looking in the right direction if he be contrasted briefly with the Italian Saint, born the year after Stanislaus's death.

To begin with, the Pole and the Lombard were utterly unlike in feature. Aloysius's chin was pointed, and his jaw-bone marked; Stanislaus was round-headed and plump, and had no angularities of feature. His nose was short and quite unlike Aloysius's very marked and high-bridged nose; his face was full and his colour high, while Aloysius soon became thin, and even haggard, and was sallow. Both had dark hair and eyes, but Stanislaus's eyes sparkled, while Aloysius's blazed, or were hidden. Stanislaus, again, we never may forget, belonged to a nation unique for character in Europe. He had all the vivacity and ver-

* Yet we have seen statues, fit examples of our modern sterility of inspiration, alike in all points save that in their open hands might be placed, at will, the Infant Jesus, or a Crucifix, or a Rule-book, when they became Stanislaus or Aloysius or Berchmans respectively.

satility and the passion of his race; all their brilliancy, and less than their average of melancholy; he had that intensity of interest in the visible world around him, combined with that incurable other-worldliness, which makes so much of the charm, as of the tragedy, of the Pole. Aloysius has, to an extraordinarily marked degree, the mingled characteristics of the Teuton and the Lombard Italian, the two strains which were so noticeable in his genealogy, and were brought to him, not only by his mother, but through that ancestress of his who was a Hohenzollern, grand-daughter of a Burgrave of Nuremberg and Prince Elector of Brandenburg. Finally, Stanislaus is all that we mean of best by the words simple, and frank, impulsive and unaffected; spontaneous, direct, and irrepressible. Aloysius was the last of these things—terribly so. But it is difficult to say he was any of the others, save in some complicated sense suited to his complicated character. He was calculated, yet not insincere; deliberate, yet not hesitating; introspective, not self-centred; detailed in habit, yet not paltry, and never "finnicking"; sensitive, though not neurotic; austere, not gloomy; concentrated, yet no brooder, even as Stanislaus was no mere dreamer of romantic

dreams. Stanislaus laughed often: do we imagine Aloysius laughing? Scarcely; yet his grave and thoughtful smile was frequent. In fine, Stanislaus is painted with his eyes turned upwards to the sky; Aloysius's are bent upon the skull or Crucifix. Stanislaus cries out with John, "*Amen*—yes, yes!—Come, Lord Jesus"; Aloysius, with Peter, mutters: "*Exi a me*—Back from me, Lord! I am a sinful man." The life of both was one long Holy Communion; but Stanislaus, saluting, as it were, exclaims: "I am glad to see Your Majesty"*; Aloysius, still beating his breast, repeats the *Domine, non sum dignus*, even while begging of his Divine physician healing and incorruption for his soul.

And the fact is that in his measure (which is quite different from ours) Aloysius was infected by the *maladie du siècle*, and could be nothing but self-conscious if he would serve God as God demanded. Stanislaus was so spontaneous, fresh, and unconscious because he was so essentially *healthy* all through. Almost as with the body, of which we are un-

* In Father Rickaby's "Waters that go softly," p. 60, we have Clarendon's charming anecdote of the old servant who, when sent to wait on Charles II., a fugitive and in disguise, was quick to recognize his King, and so to welcome him.

conscious till it comes to be "out of order," the soul, too, should not be constantly our object of conscious attention. If it is healthy, its action springs normally forth and grasps and assimilates God's world and God Himself without our self-analysis, nor according to rule and formula. Of course the soul, like the body, needs a gymnastic irksome at times, and will have its healthy growing pains. And it differs from the body in this, that it will go on growing and developing, and thus to some extent suffering, until its full emancipation, when it has realized its potentiality of becoming God's image and likeness, which is Christ. It cannot then be argued, from what we have said, that the Christian can freely abandon the penitential and ascetical practices of which we are accustomed to read in the lives of the Saints, and to which, each in our measure, we are exhorted. The perfectly innocent soul needs no penance; but ours are not that: the perfectly mortified sinner needs no further mortifications; but we are not that either. And the Saints, innocent or penitent, need always, as we said, that *ascesis* or discipline which is the gymnastic, the fit exercise of the soul. Stanislaus and Aloysius practised it alike, though the Pole went about his life

with the free, singing spirit of the Gonfalonier of Christ (as Francis of Assisi, himself a Saint of the purest "natural" inspiration, was surnamed); his music should be the brave, high-hearted lyrics of those Elizabethan or Cavalier poets so nearly his contemporaries: he counted the world, as a modern poet has said,

> "A lists that God hath built
> For haughty hearts to ride a-tilt."

Only I should like to substitute, for that epithet *haughty*, the word beloved by our ancestors, *joyous*. Stanislaus's forehead never frowned: Aloysius, like some Tannhäuser, who should have seen, but never climbed, the Hill of Pleasure, set his face grimly, to grim music, on a pilgrimage to Rome whence he should never return more. Stanislaus was all freedom: Heaven had lain about him in his infancy, and no shades of any prison were to close about the spirit, at least, of his boyhood.

Thus early in our study of St. Stanislaus have we insisted on this *health* of his soul. Innocence is health. We may have reached, perhaps, the limit of that phase of "decadence" which, some few years ago, was an alarming symptom in all our art and literature. We do not propose here to examine decadence. But at least we will say that it

essentially would have nothing to do with *innocence* except to spoil it. We have to set our face most definitely against all theory or instinct which makes us think lightly of and almost deprecate innocence. We all, without being decadents, yet tend, I suppose, to think that a man innocent in act lacks experience; or is uninteresting; or is, if a Saint, less attractive and less valuable because less like ourselves. These arguments are really fallacious and often not quite sincere. Really, we are relieved to think the Saints "weren't so extraordinarily good after all," because we deduce that we, then, may not be so very bad. It it flattering to believe we are only just not canonizable. But to feel that no one is "interesting" until he "knows things," is to confuse ignorance (which we deplore, or at least disregard, as mainly negative) with innocence (which we are praising, and which is positive). Stanislaus, we believe, was, even in boyhood, not ignorant, and could not, anyhow, have long remained so. That makes the glory of his innocence only the more lovely. For they who find such true innocence still insipid, are like men who fail to find taste in food unless it be slightly rotten.

Only one whose mind, to start with, had a

"twist," a "kink," as they say, can find his pleasure exclusively in beauty that is slightly tainted or awry. And, lastly, it remains a specious argument that experience is never too dearly bought; that to understand oneself and life one must have known experimentally its darker possibilities and one's own. That is to argue that one should, for the sake of experience, test incapacitating illness, or accident, or poison, or a broken heart, or a wrecked career; that one should risk certain danger of death with extreme uncertainty of ultimate escape, for no reason, save the winning a new experience. No doubt lessons of incalculable value may be drawn from one's own physical disasters or moral falls; a man's sufferings and spiritual sicknesses may fill him with insight and sympathy and patience. The Church sings *felix culpa* of the world's great tragedy; and it was once a quaint dictum of asceticism that the robust could hardly hope for sanctity. This cult of illness was, however, to be supplemented, and never could be primary or permanent. It remains that it is the healthy soul that is the best developed, the fullest in its perfection, the most far-reaching and varied in its action, the most beautiful, the most fragrant, and brilliant with the subtlest

happiness. It is of the highest possible moment, in our days when the sense of sin evaporates and low ideals of pessimistic cynicism prevail, that we should appreciate, at its proper value, innocence. Nor must we grudge to Stanislaus that he resembled his flawless mother, the Immaculate Virgin.

At the age, however, of fourteen, Stanislaus was sent by his father to Vienna, where, with his elder brother Paul, under the care of Bilinski, they might, in that famous University town, obtain a higher education than Poland could offer.

There is a period in the spiritual life which St. John of the Cross calls, mystically, the *Dark Night* of the soul. There is a certain interspace in the consolations of most men's moral life which a very different writer quaintly calls *The Tunnel*. Stanislaus was about to enter now that time of heavy darkness.

II

In the July of 1564 Paul, Bilinski and Stanislaus set out for Vienna, together with a footman and two others, arriving on the 26th. The Jesuits had there a college, and, attached to it, a sort of hostel, where they put

up the foreign students who came to them. For their school had become famous, and was presumably exciting already those jealousies which the successes of the earlier Jesuit education always aroused, particularly in University towns.

The religious fervour of the Jesuit Fathers was intense and infectious. The lay-boarders shared their meals, heard the books they had read during them, and imitated the penitential practices of a religious community. Among the Catholics, vocations broke out; among the Lutherans (for many of them were sent to share in the indisputably first-rate and extremely inexpensive education it was the Jesuits' ambition and practice to impart), conversions were frequent. And nothing could shake the resolution of these young devotees.

In this house the two brothers took up their dwelling, and Stanislaus found himself in an atmosphere of piety to which he responded at once. He spent his free time in the church; he heard three Masses daily; he asked again and again to become a novice; he cut himself off from all ordinary social intercourse. At this point his brother Paul becomes important in his career. Paul is as interesting and as little studied a personality as the Elder

Brother of the Prodigal Son. Their resemblances and contrasts are not devoid of piquancy. Thus there is little doubt that of the two brothers Paul seemed far the more satisfactory to his father, precisely because he remained within the cycle of idea and behaviour familiar to John. Stanislaus was to be the prodigal, wandering into a world of vision and habit far enough from that of his home and tradition, careless of his patrimony, and forgetful of his folk. Paul realized that this was happening, and with whatever we may have to reproach him, we must never forget that *he had his point of view.* For the present his duty was to look after his younger brother, according to John Kostka's views and plans. There was only a year, it is true, between them, but at that age, and race, and rank those twelve months made a great difference; and Stanislaus was perhaps immature, in some ways, and Paul a trifle too old, each for his years. So Paul, at the time, took his father's point of view, widely as he was destined to depart from it in the end. The notion that he was carrying out John Kostka's wishes formed an excellent starting-point for the gratification of his own inclinations, and, it is possible, of that spite and jealousy which

gradually accumulated in a monastic atmosphere as little suited to him as it was congenial to Stanislaus. Circumstances played into his hands. The Emperor had died actually the day before their arrival. His successor, Maximilian, eight months later, demanded back from the Jesuits the house which Ferdinand had lent to them. Paul, with the other members of the college, had to take lodgings in town. He looked for a good suite of rooms in the fashionable quarter, and found them in the house of the Senator Kimberker, a Lutheran. Here the pieties of the college became difficult of fulfilment for Stanislaus, who, however, set his teeth and went his own way as far as might be. He kept up his practice of weekly Confession and Communion, and fasted on their eve, leaving his brother and Bilinski to finish their meals alone. Paul, annoyed at the line his brother was taking, set servants to watch his movements; but Stanislaus shook off their dogging footsteps, and escaped whenever he could to the Jesuit church. Like Aloysius, he haunted, too, the dusty garrets and empty recesses of Kimberker's house for quiet and prayer, and, stimulated, as always in these cases, by opposition, began to rise at midnight to pray,

and to flog himself. The lives of the brothers became doubly divorced, for Paul, on his side, was also going his own way. It diverged totally from the younger boy's, nor was Bilinski for correcting it. Paul had made great friends with two other young Poles, one of them a relative, and, oddly enough, named Stanislaus Kostka, like his brother. The other was called Rozrazevski. There is no very serious evidence that these young fellows led what we mean by an immoral life. It is totally unnecessary to enhance the whiteness of a Saint by blackening his fellows. However, Vienna has never had the reputation of being a moral town exactly, and they certainly avoided none of the facilities it offered of enjoying themselves, whether they fully availed themselves of them or not. They were all well off, dressed brilliantly, were extremely fond of the theatre and of dancing ; they were highly insubordinate and noisy, and their conversation was not, to say the least, more restrained than at the table of John Kostka years before. Now it really is not astonishing, to use the words of their footman, Lawrence Pacifici, if Stanislaus's behaviour in this entourage gave rise "to constant and almost daily disturbances," especially as the whole party slept in the same

bedroom. Paul grew frantic with annoyance when Stanislaus, forced to assist at some not very edifying supper-parties, sat silent. He nagged unceasingly at the boy, and ultimately came to worse than bullying him, and his two companions backed him up with zest. We may half wish that Stanislaus had not kept up his habit of rising at night to pray, or of prolonging his prayers when the others wanted to go to sleep, or even of being found praying by his bed when they came home late from very prayerless scenes. They may be forgiven a deal of exasperation; yet there was a brutality of behaviour on their part which nothing can excuse: they knocked the boy violently about, kicked him over as he knelt, cut at him with their canes, and indulged in all the cruel horse-play which bigger boys can permit themselves at the expense of a smaller, especially if he adds to his misdemeanours the crowning impertinence of not retaliating. At times one is inclined to wish that Stanislaus had, indeed, knocked Paul down, or tried to. Even though he was one to three, he probably would have stopped what came to be a serious persecution. But perhaps set fights are an English institution, and we really cannot ask him to have chal-

lenged his brother to a duel. And there is not the slightest doubt that he was fond of Paul. But the Saints are incurable realists; and most certainly Stanislaus—having before his mind the Crucifix, and the Silence of Jesus, and the words, "Love your enemies," "Do good to them that hate you," and many another utterance of the supreme Example of patience and forgiveness—simply decided to submit and not to hit back. I am not for a moment denying the utility, at times, of fights. They are one of the clumsy adjustments of which our dislocated social system is susceptible. That they are dying out is by no manner of means a necessarily consoling symptom. They are one of the best means of clearing an air thunderous with that envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness which sour the milk of human kindness. They end often in a new and lasting friendship. But methods excellent in school, barracks, or on board ship may be out of place in the career of a Saint, and we dare not quarrel with Stanislaus's point of view. He had his method, no less than Paul. And so, too, had Bilinski. Where Paul was violent, Bilinski was sarcastic. It was the rapier after the bludgeon. And he was plausible and confusing—Stanislaus must have vulgar tastes;

he had no self-respect, no proper pride; his dress and his friends and his habits were a disgrace; he must be intolerably conceited, too, if he thought he knew so much better than his father, his brother, and his tutor, and his own world generally. He was disobedient and wasteful, for his father had quite other ideas in sending him to Vienna than to see him turn a Saint. He was a thorough mischief-maker, and brought discord among his own relatives, and made himself a nuisance in a house where, after all, he was a guest. . . . This lasted for over two years, from March, 1565 to August, 1567.

Anyone who has helplessly watched the change which comes over a boy's face when he is being systematically bullied, knows how dreadful a thing it is. He becomes cowed, furtive, sullen, and untruthful. Sometimes, when his vitality is low, then his thwarted, lonely existence means black misery; his self-control breaks up, and he cries bitterly and hopelessly at some chance word or impression. This is a horrible thing to see. At other times the maddened organism strikes out in a frenzy of self-defence; thus murderers are made. But normally the spirit is just broken: the boy emerges listless, furtive,

erratic, a recluse, or an Ishmael among his fellows at the best.

We did not need that Paul should leave on record that Stanislaus was "braver than the rest of them." The grit, the pluck, the backbone (all these words we use of boys) that were his, cannot be exaggerated. Circumscribed and repressed, and beaten back as he was, it was his body that gave way, not his indomitable will. A nervous collapse, apparently, of a most acute description seized him, ending in delirium, and perhaps brain fever. The sickness ran its course rapidly; he was soon in danger. Visited by hideous apparitions, in which the devil leapt, like a huge black dog, upon his bed, only to be routed by the Sign in which Stanislaus was conquering, the poor boy was persecuted too. The Lutheran host refused to permit a Catholic priest to enter his house, or to administer those last Sacraments and that Communion for which the sick boy begged. The tutor and Paul—no, not the bravest of that band!—were afraid to intercede for Stanislaus . . . he would not, surely, get them turned out into the street? . . . he was not as ill as he thought. But it is significant that Bilinski, suddenly panic-stricken, sat up incessantly with the boy, seven nights in

succession, afraid of the last change. But Stanislaus belonged to that Confraternity of St. Barbara whose members trust to their patron Saint to obtain for them Viaticum before their death. He remembered this, and day and night occupied his thoughts with prayer to the Saint whose feast he had just kept, a fortnight earlier, with fit devotion. One night he suddenly seized Bilinski's shoulder and shook him violently. "On your knees!" he cried out, rising from bed upon his own. "See St. Barbara! She is coming into the room with two Angels, and they are bringing to me the Blessed Sacrament." Thrice he prayed the *Domine, non sum dignus*, and then, exclaiming, "God of my heart!" he felt himself receive the Angel's Food upon his lips; and then lay down again, and the tutor remained bewildered. As for the boy, he grew rapidly worse, and hope, it seemed, must be abandoned. Bilinski, exhausted by his vigils, had had himself at last replaced by a servant for one night, and returned to his own room. In the morning, when the servants in their turn slept, he stole back into the sick-room, and there, by the flickering night-lamp, saw Stanislaus sitting up, and exclaiming that he was cured. Bilinski strove to quiet him. The boy wished to

rise and go straight to thank God for his recovery in the church; Bilinski persuaded him to wait for the doctor's coming; they, in their turn, forbade him to move, fearing illusion, or, at any rate, a relapse; but no relapse came, and Stanislaus was well. And, indeed, no otherwise might he be; during that last night of illness a vision of Mary herself had shone before him: the gentle Virgin had held her Baby in her arms, and, stooping, had placed the Holy Child beside the boy, and the two kissed each other, and the kiss of Jesus healed him. Then she bade Stanislaus give himself for ever to the Company of this her Son.

Thus, neither sickness nor persecution were to separate Stanislaus from a holiest Communion, be it that gracious incorporation of Christian with Christ which is achieved in the sacramental mystery, or that more human comradeship in which loyal souls are proud to walk with their Master throughout life. But the consummation was not yet.

III

Stanislaus, after his recovery, deemed it his duty to be "not disobedient to the heavenly vision," and, in despite of all, to force an entry

into the Society of Jesus. He went through, however, that period of black desolation and discouragement which is so familiar to the convalescent, and continued quite clearly to kick against the pricks. At last that grew too hard for him. He shut his eyes to the probable consequences of a plain request to be received as a Jesuit, went to Confession, and applied to the Provincial for admission. The most unlooked-for obstacle here confronted him. The Jesuits would have no word to say to him unless he were first authorized by his father to approach them. As Stanislaus was scarcely seventeen, they were of course perfectly right ; and, indeed, experience had taught them at Vienna that to act otherwise was not wrong only, but highly unprofitable. Stanislaus turned to the Papal Legate, Commendone, Papal Envoy to England on the accession of Queen Mary, who had been made Cardinal in Poland, and knew the Kostkas. Commendone supported the boy's request, but the Provincial was obstinate. So was Stanislaus. What he could not get in Vienna he would seek elsewhere, if he had to beg his way as he went. He would tramp from one Jesuit house to another over all Europe (save only Poland !) till he got his wish. He told all this to

a Portuguese Jesuit, Father Antoni, who, whether because he saw that Stanislaus would take his own course whatever he advised, or because he scarcely realized the conditions of the problem in this foreign country—as to him it was—suggested to Stanislaus that he might apply to Peter Canisius, Provincial of Upper Germany, at Augsburg; or to Francis Borgia himself, General of the whole Society at Rome. He even offered him letters of introduction to each.

Stanislaus now felt his position stronger, and after the next scene with Paul announced that if this went on he would leave Vienna, and Paul would have to answer for it to their father. Paul, in a passion, told Stanislaus to go where and when he chose, but to keep out of his sight at any rate. The boy rather naïvely held himself to have received, by these words, his "leave of absence"; he rose at daybreak one August morning of 1567, knocked at the footman's door, told him to say, at dinner-time, that he had been asked out to dine, and left the house. He went to Mass and Communion, called on Antoni for his letters, and went out of the town. Here he turned aside into a wood, stripped, and put on a peasant's canvas blouse, which he fastened round his waist with

a cord. On this he hung his rosary. He wore, too, a large broad-brimmed peasant's hat. And then he began his tramp. Evening came; there was no Stanislaus. At Vienna all was confusion. Paul suddenly realized, with the awful shock that most of us have sometime known, that he had been taken at his word. Irresponsibility had had results. Something had come of it. . . . We all obstinately believe that nothing we do can, in the long run, matter. *This* had mattered! Paul rushed to the Jesuits: they knew nothing. Antoni "kept his counsel,"* but Paul's fright infected them, and in a day or two Father Wolfgang Perringer wrote to Rome a scared letter, exculpating the Fathers. "What will happen next," he writes, startled definitely out of his rhetoric, "God only knows." From this point the narrative reflects the prevalent confusion. What is certain is that early next morning Paul, Bilinski, and Kimberker took carriage and horses, and set out after Stanislaus. How did they guess the road? Folk said that they consulted a fortune-teller; but Paul and Bilinski, when they read this afterwards in a Life of Stanislaus, angrily denied it. Conceivably a Hungarian school-friend of Stanislaus had already

* Coleridge.

found, hidden between the pages of a school note-book, a letter in which Stanislaus explained to him what he was going to do. Anyhow, they returned, after a drive out of forty-five miles, unsuccessful and worse frightened than ever. Bilinski said they could not overtake Stanislaus. The footman, who only understood them when they talked German to Kimberker, gathered they had seen Stanislaus, but not recognized him. But Stanislaus himself agreed that they came up with and actually passed him, and, failing to see through his disguise, turned back home. Others say Stanislaus left the main road for a footpath ; others that the horses shied at a bridge, or were restive and refused to go on, until, their heads turned homewards, they galloped at full speed. Anyhow, Paul, crossing himself a great number of times, said that nothing should induce him to stir another step in pursuit of his brother. And the footman remembered afterwards that astonishing incidents had occurred, of which he had forgotten the details. Another servant had seen the Saint cross a river dry-shod. And so the story grew and multiplied, and on Paul devolved the thankless task of writing the whole business to his father, enclosing Stanislaus's letter to the Hungarian schoolboy. The

Polish nobleman was wild with rage, wrote threatening letters to Cardinals; declared he would have no Jesuits more in Poland; that he would dissolve their colleges; and added a note to Stanislaus informing him that he should be carried home to Poland bound hand and foot.

And meanwhile the students at Vienna University were turning graceful Latin verses upon the event, and wrote epics of which Stanislaus was the hero.

Stanislaus, more serene than any, was during this time walking almost due west towards Augsburg, some 450 miles distant, at the astonishing rate of about 30 miles a day. He slept under hedges, and ate what he could pick up. This journey, of which we know no incident for certain, is none the less one of the most astounding proofs of the boy's pluck and tenacity of purpose.

Arrived at Augsburg, he found the Provincial was at Dillingen, a day's walk distant. He insisted, though still fasting, on starting on the spot, absolutely refusing to wait for an hour's rest, or to eat.* A Jesuit Father accom-

* This implies, since Stanislaus reached the town so early in the morning, that he had either walked all night, or, possibly arriving very late, had been forced to sleep outside the gates.

panied the exhausted and starving boy. A spire showed itself on the horizon. There was the food for which Stanislaus was fasting.* He hastened more than ever: the door was open; people were passing in. He hurriedly entered, knelt, and waited. No Mass began. Raising his eyes, he saw that the church, though clearly Catholic in furniture, had still an air of unfamiliarity. His companion made inquiries. Yes, it had been seized by Lutherans. There would be no Mass; there was no Blessed Sacrament. Stanislaus, weak and defeated, broke into a passion of tears. But again, when men failed him, Heaven gave him welcome. The kindly miracle was reiterated; a vision of Angels dawned around him, and ministered to him the Bread of Heaven.

I wish to emphasize the fact that the moment Canisius had had the whole situation explained to him by Stanislaus, he consented to his admission into the Society. There has, I suppose, but rarely been a more level-headed, robust-

* It seems extraordinary that he had not communicated at any rate at the College. He appears to have been obsessed, as it were, by the idea of pushing on at all costs. I suspect that it was this period of overstrain, excitement, and constant fasting at so critical an age which finally undermined his constitution.

minded man than this German statesman—for such in truth he was—a more vigorous ruler, and a more sagacious judge of men and things. Had he thought Stanislaus a hot-headed young fanatic, or a disobedient school-boy, or a rebellious son, there is not the slightest doubt that he would have sent him straight back to his father. In our whole verdict upon Stanislaus we must remember this: Peter Canisius was on the spot to judge; we are at a distance. He had a great deal to lose by making a mistake: had Stanislaus entered, as Canisius wished him to do, in Germany, Canisius himself, and all his province, would have run distinct and serious risks; wherever he entered, the Society in Poland was being placed, by those responsible for his entry, in grave jeopardy. Canisius was ready for either responsibility: it was Stanislaus himself who considered Germany too close to Poland for his personal safety, and asked to go to Rome. Canisius sent him there, and more than once, in his curt and business-like manner, wrote from Munich, Augsburg, and Ingolstadt to the General about him. There is no rhetoric in Canisius: Stanislaus is described as "noble, virtuous, and studious," an "excellent young Polish noble," and "a worthy young man of

gentle blood." "I hope great things from him" is the utmost of his panegyric. Indeed, he had tested the boy severely. Until his two companions were ready to go Romewards—that is, for about a month—Stanislaus was placed as an ordinary servant in the College at Dillingen.* Not only was the work heavy in itself, but none of the students, of course, had any idea of the boy's rank and bringing-up. This was no self-humiliation which admits, if it does not beg for, the subtler flattery; no graceful waiting at table, guaranteed soon to be over, as of fine ladies at some dinner for the poor; nor even the appreciated good services of some great person in the slums. *There was no recognition.* It was the supreme test, whether Stanislaus were really anxious to be off with the old life and its pomps and privileges, and genuinely realized that henceforward he must come "not to be ministered unto, but to minister." "I am among you as one that doth serve." Such was Stanislaus's model, and his copy of it was faithful to the life.

In September he set out, by way of Munich, for Rome.

* In 1564 an Englishman, Father Thomas Darbyshire, was appointed to be its Superior.

IV

What we have just detailed is, I suppose, the least charming part, so to say, of Stanislaus's life, but far the most character-forming. During it his brilliancy was of necessity eclipsed; his versatility and powers of sympathy were dragooned into the doggedness of unattractive self-defence, and his whole vitality compressed into one narrow channel of purpose. His life in the Lutheran's house, on his tramps, at Dillingen, went right down beneath the level of laughter. Such experiences as these, if they last long, slay the weak soul, and scar deep lines on the strong one. Stanislaus could never again be just the light-hearted child of two years since; it is his glory, and the proof of the strength of his most fine-spun fibre, that neither cynicism, sourness, nor indolence were bred in him. But for the moment all that charming childlikeness returned, effervescent and irrepressible as of old. He was coming into his kingdom. Every step carried him, with certainty, nearer his Jerusalem, his El Dorado, his Holy Grail. He ran up the steep path when a shrine of Mary or a Crucifix welcomed his quick eye; his comrades, climbing more soberly, found him waiting for them,

refreshed and fragrant with prayer. Italy lay open to his eyes in the splendour of its autumn colouring, and seemed lovelier than Paradise; he drew great breaths of the wide air of liberty.

Stanislaus showed the gaiety and sudden expansion which we connect chiefly, perhaps, with converts or with novices; for it is proverbial that a noviciate is the home of gaiety. The whole-hearted convert too is a delightful person to have to do with. The last barrier is down, the last weight tossed off; he is a fish in water, a pauper exile restored to his estate. He has enchanting modesties, and still more pleasant assumptions of experience. He talks wisely or familiarly of the things of his new household, and yet is for ever making new discoveries. His footsteps are on his true and native soil, and yet are each an adventure and an exploration. New devotions, special festivals, are his dainties; but he greets the normal with an appetite that older men may envy; he hurries along with him the smiling and kindly Catholic, who is accustomed to living in his Father's house, and, like an excited and delighted guest, insists on showing to his host the views and beauties of his own domain; and he does, in fact, detect delightful points which had been stale or never noticed. All this sense

of discovery, combined with stability; of adventure, and of peace; of successful experiment, of rich and inexhaustible possession, was that of Stanislaus at present; and he was scarcely to have the time to pass from the sparkling days of consolations to the tranquillity that is his who rests in long experience of God's daily mercy. There is a lovely tale in the 'Arabian Nights' which tells of an enchanted water. The pilgrim who had found and brought it home poured it into a fountain basin, where it gathered itself spontaneously, and rose, delicate and strong, into a jet, falling back in clouds of rainbow-tinted spray into its pool. The pool brimmed and brimmed and over-flowed, and never could be emptied, while the leaping jet was never to fail nor flag. So for Stanislaus, God's joyous grace leapt spontaneous and unquenchable in his heart; it brimmed and fell in showers round his neighbours, and tinted for them as for him the whole world in radiance and new beauty. But there are souls, like that of Aloysius, perhaps, in his later years, which are like a sunlit, waveless sea. The splendid light floods and penetrates them; they are like living gold—"transparent gold," as the Apocalypse will have it; but they are motionless and at rest in the glory of God's intimacy; and at the

horizon so identified are their splendours that no human eye can distinguish which is heaven and which the sea, nor human thought disintegrate the embrace of God and the soul He has gathered into union.

Stanislaus therefore arrived in Rome in the autumn of 1567, and was presented, doubtless, to the General, Francis Borgia, to whom he, with his two companions, carried a letter of introduction from Canisius. It is curious to picture the meeting between the boy of seventeen, fresh from his abdication, to the aged ex-Duke, who had sacrificed a position even more magnificent. And these two Saints—the austere, splendid Spaniard, and the high-strung, vibrant Pole—had been brought together by Canisius, the German of modest birth and shrewd and sober kindliness. Canisius would shortly be at Rome, and round the three were to be clustered an amazing band, born in heroic times, destined for every martyrdom.*

* There were several Scots and Englishmen. John Hay of Dalgety was to die Chancellor of the University of Pont-à-Mousson; he defended the Eucharist at Strasburg disguised as a layman, but with such success that the Chancellor exclaimed he must be the devil or a Jesuit. There were also Edward and John Rastall and Thomas Smeaton (spelt Smetom in the lists); and, among his English countrymen, Christopher Perkins, who also betrayed them.

Stanislaus moved about from the Professed House, near what is now the Gesù, to the Roman College, near Sant' Ignazio; and to Sant' Andrea, on the Quirinal. And, wherever he was, he felt himself at home. Here he found himself

> "where he longed to be;
> Home is the sailor, home from sea,
> And the hunter home from the hill."

To Stanislaus home meant motherhood. We have nothing but our imagination to tell us what, at Rostkov, his mother must have been to Stanislaus. Nothing but our imagination, that is, and our knowledge of what was his love for his celestial mother, Mary. We shall speak truest if we declare that his passionate devotion to his mother in heaven was at once in the likeness and the transcendent prototype of all best human affection. What we positively enjoy repeating about Stanislaus is that he was in all things supremely natural, direct, and took himself for granted. He was asked if he loved Mary. "She is my mother," he said, puzzled and half indignant. A boy does not wonder whether, or why, or how he loves his mother. She is there. She always has been there, and, surely, always will be. She is the best mother in the world, and the wisest and most beauti-

ful, and there never has been, nor will be, anyone like her. Stanislaus called her love-names, and made her foolish little presents, and scribbled her initials in his books, and sang her favourite songs,* and especially that *Salve Regina,* which, though it recalls her queenliness and the weakness and troubles of her worshipper, cannot, for that, forget her pitifulness, her sweetness, and her tenderness. There are souls, and even Saints, who most contemplate in Mary the supreme realization of all those mysteries of grace which, through her motherhood, the Incarnate God has made the inheritance of all who will. They see, in her, one focus of the glories of Christianity. They break out into praises of the splendid paradoxes, the rich syntheses, the exquisite theorems of what is almost a philosophy. There are, too, souls who, one may hope, will outgrow themselves, for they plot out arithmetically a suitable piety and devotion to be paid, as though by proportion, to Mary. But Mary is unique : devotion to her differs from that offered to any other creature. And Mary is no abstraction, any more than is her Son. Just as in all Stanislaus's life speculation seems totally lacking, and

* Undoubtedly the *Omni Die dic Mariae,* which he will have believed to be by Prince Casimir of Poland.

calculation equally absent, so in his behaviour with the Queen and mother of his life he was as spontaneous and generous and delightful as in all else. He followed his instincts, which were pure, and so found his happiness.*

In this "heaven-haven" Stanislaus led a life that admits no chronicling. The noviciate has weights and measures of its own, and alters all perspectives. The world retired, in Stanislaus's imagination, to a dream-distance, and not even a threatening letter from his father, and the news brought by Nicolas Lassoicki, a fellow-student with Stanislaus at Vienna, that John was threatening Cardinal Hosius with the suppression of the Society in Poland, could ruffle his serenity. Indeed, a new tranquillity and peace descended on his spirit, a little feverish heretofore. He prayed gently, and did all his actions with that grace and winning

* "Yet I am not sorry that I loved you—
Ah, what else had I, a boy, to do?"

The words of our sad poet witness how a soul like his or Stanislaus's goes with direct passion, like a fiery arrow, to the best it knows. We who, unlike Stanislaus, cannot but speculate and frame conjectures, may wonder what, had he lived in our neo-paganism, Stanislaus would have grown to be; and what, had Mary triumphed in his boyhood, might have been the destiny of the Englishman.

simpleness which was his increasing charm. Childlikeness was more than ever his characteristic: he collected anecdotes about the Madonna; he turned night and day towards her miraculous shrine at Sta. Maria Maggiore for a blessing; he carried his Rules, copied out, near his heart; he obeyed them with meticulous but never anxious accuracy. The future was no care for him: he had no ambitions, even for the crown of distant martyrdom. Joy is said to be a feature of his "meditations" even on death and judgment; they end with the praise of Happy Deaths, and with the Psalmist's *Quem admodum desiderat*—

"Even as the stag panteth for the water-brooks . . ."

the phrase for ever consecrated to express the yearning of the soul for all more heavenly fruitions.

Nor was his reward distant. The hot Roman autumn was a shock after the snowy Alpine climate; the heavy spring and summer would put the climax to the strain. He had not long been in Rome before he would feel suffocated after the effort and joys of meditation, and would pace the garden even in the iciest winds. And to his fevered chest he would have to put cold poultices. His hectic colour was soon noticeable. Fainting fits grew constant; Father

Augustus Mazzino, an ex-doctor, was especially deputed to take charge of the boy's health.

August came, and with it Canisius on a visit to Pius V. It was a joy to Stanislaus to assist at a lecture given to the novices by the German Provincial. Its text was the proverb *Ferrare Agosto*—"Make August welcome," comparable to our "Ring the New Year in." He exhorted the novices to begin well a month which, as it was to prove, was to see the end of all transitory things for Stanislaus.

And somehow his instinct told him so, and he observed at "recreation" that Canisius's voice had been the voice of God, and that he would die that month. On the fifth he visited Sta. Maria Maggiore with Father de Sa, and confided to him that he hoped to celebrate the Feast of the Assumption, the 15th, to which de Sa referred, in heaven. This, on the 10th—the Feast of St. Lawrence, his patron chosen for the month—he asked the martyred deacon to obtain for him from God. He wrote a letter to Mary, making the same request, and went with it on his breast to Holy Communion.

That night, Wednesday, he felt ill and was helped to bed. His pulse was weak, and to two visitors he told what he had asked. But

the sickness appeared quite trifling. He was feverish, however, and on Friday evening he was moved to a higher and cooler room, several of the novices going with him, so capable was he still of ordinary conversation. When he saw his bed, he knelt down, signed it with the Cross, and said, "I shall not leave this bed again." The hearers were startled and disturbed. "At least," he added, "if it be God's will."

On Sunday the 14th he told the infirmarian he would die that day. The good man laughed, and said it would take a greater miracle to die of that illness than to be cured of it. Midday passed, when Stanislaus suddenly collapsed. The Master of Novices brought him round with restoratives. "O man of little heart," he said, laughing, "do you give up for so slight a thing?" "A man of little heart am I indeed," said Stanislaus. "But the thing is not slight, for I shall die of it."

When the evening came it was clear the boy was indeed dying. He made confession, and received Viaticum and Extreme Unction, talked cheerfully a little, and more times than one received new Absolution—a scruple had to be hushed—he could not recall if he had been confirmed. Three priests sat up in the

sick-room. Stanislaus could no longer say his Rosary, but his fingers were twined about it. "It belongs to my mother," he said to Father Ruiz, who tried to take it. He answered their gentle questions with the assurance that he had nothing on his mind to trouble him. "My heart is ready," he kept repeating. "O God, my heart is ready." "The time is short," he said to Father Fazio. "And it remains," went on the priest—"That we prepare ourselves," whispered the dying boy. So for some hours after the midnight they prayed to the dying Son of God, and to the Saints who had followed Him up to Calvary. But it troubled his humble soul that he should die in a soft bed, while his innocent Master had had nothing but the Cross. Like many another in holy history, he asked to die lying on the floor. It was so late now that nothing could be of moment to his living or his dying, so they placed his mattress on the tiles, and laid him there.

The cold dawn glimmered at the window. But on Stanislaus's forehead was a more solemn radiance. Awestruck, Ruiz bent to catch the joyous sentence which the boy's lips were trying to frame. He said that Mary, with her white court of Virgins, was once more shining near him, and that the same voice

which had bidden him follow in the Company of Jesus upon earth, was calling him already to an eternal companionship in heaven.

It was three o'clock in the morning. Stanislaus lay, still smiling, still holding his rosary and a burning taper. They could not guess whether he yet were with them. They lifted up before him his picture of Our Lady. But his eyes remained unchanged. He had no more need of pictures.

* * * * *

The story of so short a life should itself be short; and not many morals should be drawn from so meteoric a career.*

* Perhaps the most striking is the extraordinary future of Paul. What became of the prodigal's Elder Brother? The parable does not tell us. Paul, at any rate, suddenly arrived in Rome, armed with full powers to bring his brother back. But Stanislaus had been dead a month. The appalling shock this must have been to Paul we can only guess. Apparently his whole mentality was recast, or, rather, the true character showed itself for the first time now that the crust of habitual thought and action had been shattered. He went to the sealed tomb, and there "wept bitterly." Soon after, his father and only surviving brother died. The Kostkas centred their hopes of perpetuation in Paul. But match after match failed or was broken off; he lived with his widowed mother till she, too, died; he then made over much of his estate in land or money to pious works, helping

Spontaneity is not a quality that may be copied. For his fresh charm, his elasticity, and the fragrance of his innocence, we can but look at him with a brotherly delight, feel proud of him, and rejoice that the Christian family should have so been graced. As for his sinlessness, we shall remember that in him it was no mere nervelessness, cold-bloodedness, or stupidity. It is one of the great paradoxes of the Apocalypse, that the crimson blood of God's own Sacrifice will wash the soul to whiteness. The whiteness of St. Stanislaus was so fair, partly no doubt by the work of

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in particular Jesuit foundations; he lived in a small house attached to the hospital; he gave himself over to the most amazing career of prayer and austerity; his whole thought seemed centred in the memory of Stanislaus. At fifty-eight, feeling himself broken down and dying, he asked and obtained permission to enter, as a novice, the Company of Jesus. By an exquisite decision, the Feast of St. Stanislaus is kept on November 13, the day of Paul's death. The only words upon his grave were of his own choice: *Non erubesco Evangelium* ("I am not ashamed of the Gospel"). Bilinski, too, was shocked by these events out of all worldliness. He became Canon of Pultowa and Plock; and while Paul could scarcely bring himself to speak of Stanislaus, Bilinski was a willing witness to all who asked of the incidents he had been present at.

God's guarding grace, but also because it was asked of him that he too should "resist," and "unto blood." We, whether we have sinned and must retrieve our lapse, or whether we have still but to "keep ourselves unspotted from the world," have need of tremendous resolution, extreme tenacity of purpose, as well as clearness of ideal, which we well may ask of Stanislaus. Mary was his mother; but no weak, too tender mother to him. He was not petted nor coddled into sanctity. But she was faithful, as he was faithful. She asked much of him, and he gave her much. With stern yet joyful effort he did indeed retain a soul more pure than any lily. Nor is it to be wondered at that when her weary little son, having "by his hard work redeemed the time," was ready for his holiday, his mother came in person forth to meet him and to welcome him into his "eternal rest."

ST. JOHN BERCHMANS, S.J.

ST. JOHN BERCHMANS

1599—1621

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work" must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount:

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

ROBERT BROWNING.

THAT a *Life* of John Berchmans should be written is in a measure a paradox, since to so many people he will quite legitimately appear

never to have "lived" at all. And if an account of his uneventful years be indeed supplied, it may be hard to see why similar pages should not be written upon his many associates in the contemporary Jesuit houses of study or noviciates, who thought and said very much the same things as he did. And even when such an account had been decided on, and actually produced, the question remains seriously to be asked, why it should be of any interest save to those who are to live the first part of their lives in exactly the same conditions as he.

For, indeed, it is true that John neither said nor did anything in the least original, anything picturesque, anything in any ordinary sense memorable. He could not make, or would not, and, anyhow, never did make, epigrams or proverbs, or even those happy intuitional remarks which light up human nature and become the treasured acquisitions of the race. His behaviour, as we said, was identical with that of a number of other young men, leading an exceedingly dull life, and one unshared in any sense by the enormous majority of their fellows, and actually meaningless, in many of its details, to outside observation. He died before he had done any-

thing in literature, science, art, or achievement of whatever sort, for which common consent might name him worthy of immortality.

Yet he has been placed on the authorized roll of the Church's heroes.

True, then, to our method, we shall examine whether this very colourlessness may not contain for us a certain claim to attention and stimulus for our interest; and, in any case, it shall be the *meaning*, in religious and ascetical history, of St. John Berchmans that we shall here consider, and by no means shall we attempt to retail the minute occurrences of his recorded life, nor to catalogue his utterances.

I

And on the whole we could scarcely have a better example than John of what we mean by *imitation* as opposed to *copying*. In our preliminary pages upon St. Aloysius we strongly deprecated the literal "copying" of a Saint, or of anyone else, save, perhaps, in very simple and very broad matters, as where a line of conduct, or standard of judgment, or ideal of effort is "lifted" bodily by us from the heroic figure to which we are eager to

assimilate ourselves ; or, at the very beginning of our enterprise. But if there is one point about which we are surer than another, it is that John Berchmans tried to imitate St. Aloysius. Again and again this idea recurs in his talk or his notes. At Rome he did, in fact, recall Aloysius to the minds of the many laymen or ecclesiastics who had met the young Marquis, dead only eight years before John's birth. He collected stories about St. Aloysius, and it is to him that we owe the startling and illuminative tradition that a Father of the Roman College saw Aloysius (usually so measured in gait and general demeanour) racing down a gallery in that building. He followed him, astonished, and found that the young man was hurrying to Communion. . . . John regarded Aloysius as a special patron ; he doffed his cap if he mentioned him ; he was constant by his relics at Rome ; he summarized his life, and drew a portrait of the Saint from a Mantuan medal as a frontispiece ; he wrote long accounts of the progress of Aloysius's canonization, and noted down, on May 25, 1621, that he had offered that day a hundred acts of humiliation in his honour. When, on June 15, 1620, the relics of the Saint were transferred from Our Lady's chapel

in the SS. Annunziata to his own new altar, John was acolyte; and the Italian "assistant," who had known St. Aloysius well, cried out that John seemed to be Aloysius restored to life. But it was the story of his predecessor's death that John most loved; and he chose to have it read to him when the shadows of his own approaching death filled with anxiety and restlessness his sleepless nights.

Yet, as we said, in every external (save in the rudimentary and inevitable practices of piety), and in much that was internal, John was as different as possible from either Aloysius or Stanislaus. In our account of St. Stanislaus an attempt was made to show how different he himself was from St. Aloysius. But they were, at any rate, alike in this, that they were born in the very highest rank of European nobility; their boyhood was spent in castles and palaces; they were accustomed to very large and very brilliant scenes and entertainments where they met a great number of distinguished people at close quarters: royalties who, to ordinary folk, were almost mythological, with faces recognized on rare occasions in pageants of Church or State, on thrones, on coins, through the windows of gorgeous coaches, were the cousins, and playmates, and counsellors

of the little Polish prince and of the Lombard Marquis. All this pageantry, this sense that nothing was above them, this habit of acting and thinking on a large scale (and Aloysius, at any rate, had travelled not a little, and had visited Courts, and knew the camp and the seas), could not but colour, through and through, everything that they did or thought later on. "Poverty" would mean something quite special to either of them; "obedience" something altogether peculiar: the "humiliation," or, indeed, the very satisfaction of being without servants, unsaluted, one of many, would have forced on them what it would not remotely have hinted to a lad who had never been anything else save "one of many." Half Europe was perturbed when Aloysius became a Jesuit; the world was supremely unconscious of John's existence.

For John Berchmans was of very modest parentage. He was born, on March 13, 1599,* in a house at Diest, near Maastricht; its sign was "The Great and the Little Moon." His father was a shoemaker, John Charles Berch-

* He was baptized next day. The register still subsists: "Martius, 1599, 14. Jan Bergmans, Jans soon en Leyskeezyn hvysvrau. *Filius Bapt.* Joannes. *Patrini* Adriaen Claes en Geertruyt van Steyvoirt."

mans, of so respectable a record that he became not alone chairman of the town council, but churchwarden of his parish, and afterwards a magistrate of the peace. In spite of this, and in spite of the very excellent reckoning, in services rendered to the town and civic honours received, of the shoemaker, his father, and his brother (who were, in fact, burgomasters), it was felt that Elizabeth van den Hove, in marrying him, made no good match. His sister married William van Enckevort, a captain of cuirassiers, whose son rose to be field-marshal, and who numbered a Cardinal among his ancestors. Moreover, "The Great and Little Moon" belonged to Elizabeth's mother, which did not prevent her extracting her rent from the unfortunate John Charles, even when he fell upon impecunious days. Similarly, Peregrine van Hamel, who had married Elizabeth's sister Catherine, and lived next door at the sign of "The Sun," did nothing, it appears, to help his brother-in-law out of his difficulties.

At first, however, the shoemaker managed to allow to John the ordinary schooling of the town boys, which was given by Wouter van Stiphout in what had been the cloth market; and when John declared his wish to be a priest,

he consented to transfer him to a sort of informal seminary kept by Father Peter Emmerick, who had been a monk at the Premonstratensian Abbey of Tongerloo. In fact, this excellent man, at great expense, sent all his children to be educated away from the sordid, or even coarse, associations of his workshop, which he dreaded for their refinement and innocence. When, however, John was already past thirteen, and doing very well at his books, his father found himself so crippled by money difficulties, added to considerably by the severe and incurable illness of his wife, that he had to call John home, and told him he must learn a trade, and do his share in keeping the family alive. Two of his aunts, however, Béguines, at Diest, interposed, and obtained for him a free education in the house of their parish priest, Dean Timmermans. After a short time here he passed to the house of Canon John Froymont, of Mechlin, where he was further educated in return for domestic services, such as waiting at table. Rougher menial work was soon mitigated by his being made a kind of companion to three of the Canon's youngest pupils. From the Archiepiscopal Seminary, where he had followed the classes, John proceeded to

the Jesuit College, and just as his original desertion of van Stiphout for Timmermans had left the former very sore, so, says Father de Greeff, John's Greek professor, the Seminary was extremely indignant at John's departure for the College, so much so, that between the two institutes there came to be "a great gulf fixed."

Here it was that John entered the Sodality, and decided to join, if possible, the Society of Jesus.

We think we have said enough to show that, even had John done identically the same things as Stanislaus or Aloysius did, the whole foundation of his experience, and the background of his memories were so utterly different from theirs, that by a psychological necessity his mental reaction on life and on the world at large will have been, in many essential ways, no less different.

But, as a matter of fact, the events, such as they were, of the lives of Stanislaus and Aloysius had but a faint echo in that of John. It is true that John, too, had to fight for his "vocation," and it is true that precisely because he was brought up in narrow circumstances, the far humbler conditions of his fight may well have caused him, interiorly as

keen, and perhaps more distressing, a pain. For, after all, a Gonzaga and a Kostka had always lived in an atmosphere where large rivalries and contentions were of daily experience ; a world of royal rages, international disputes, clan feuds, court intrigues and parties, excommunications and such-like thunderbolts. Yet it was not nothing for those two boys to have to face—one of them, an infuriated father who to grieved parenthood added injured seignorial rights, Cardinals and Archbishops, heads of Religious orders, and a crowd of courtiers ; the other, two years of persecution, blows and sarcasm, and the threat of chains and dungeon. Aloysius, foiled in his flights from home, behaved as a hermit, and felt himself an exile in his own palace, and wrote to call an Emperor and an Empress to his help. Stanislaus fled from Vienna, and tramped hundreds of miles to his destiny, only to hear, from the omnipotent Polish overlord, of the suppression in his country of that Society on which he had set his heart, should he not return. These were tremendous blows, searing experiences, for boys of eighteen, however inured to stormy circumstance.

John, then, having obtained with difficulty the continuation of his studies at Mechlin,

in order to become a priest, proceeded to bind himself by vow, in 1616, to become a Jesuit should that be God's will, and after some three months of further reflection, at the recommendation of his confessor, wrote a long letter to tell his parents of his intention. The shoemaker, utterly stunned at first by this blow (for even as a priest John would have been able to contribute something, it is probable, to the support of the family), hurried to Mechlin. He harangued John's confessor, and then the Provincial. They argued quietly : John Charles was in part persuaded. His wife had a relative among the Capucins. To the Capucins an appeal was made. All save this relative sided with John ; but this solitary opponent was urgent, and again and again visited John's boarding-house and attacked him with more violence than argument. At last John lost patience. One day he took the Capucin by the elbow. "Look here," said he, "if you have come to talk about that again, there's the door. Go home!" John was a strong young man of seventeen, and the Capucin went away.

In September John wrote twice more to his father and mother, deprecating any delay, however slight. He refused to go home to

Diest, but begged them to come to see him at Mechlin; he hoped thus to avoid many painful and unnecessary scenes. He sent a number of affectionate messages, prepared some small presents for his family and friends, and on September 24 entered the noviciate at Mechlin.*

* We must emphasize the fact that John was extremely fond of his relatives. It is hard to judge his real feelings from his letters upon his vocation. They are, of course, full of the formulæ with which his schooling, literary and pietistic, was imbuing him, and are, indeed, more artificial than the courtly but highly individualistic letters of Aloysius, or the schoolboy effusion of Stanislaus. His letter to his mother when she was dying was full of fervent affection, as well as the phrases of religion. "Fight bravely, dearest mother," it concludes. It was an intense delight to him when his father, in 1618, after her death, became a priest. When he heard that he was to go to Rome, he asked his father to meet him first at Mechlin, whither he himself went from Antwerp, to bid farewell. On arriving there, he was shocked to hear that his father had died a week before. The surviving relatives (mostly of his mother's family) had failed to tell him of this. He returned to Antwerp, put off his departure, wrote a distinctly stiff comment upon their silence to his "grandfather, grandmother, aunts, and uncles," but quite recovered his affectionate equanimity in the course of the letter. He wrote a far more friendly greeting to old Canon Froymont, and arranged, as far as he could, for his three brothers and his sister, all younger than himself. Adrian, the second eldest, became an Augus-

We are safe, then, in saying that John's background was not only painted in far less flamboyant colours than those of the two young noblemen, his predecessors, but that, compared to theirs, his record had been a peaceful one, and that his combats had scarred him with but few and surface wounds.

To all this shall we not add the simple consideration that John was Flemish? To be a Pole is in itself a fact of psychological importance. We have already alluded to Poland's flexile, passionate, brilliant, yet other-worldly character. To have old Spanish and Lombard blood in the veins, even though modified by a northern Hohenzollern strain, accounts, too, for the sombre fire that glows, and at times blazes forth, in Aloysius. But John was Flemish—sturdy, discreet, industrious, a little unimaginative; but trustworthy, manly and clean-minded.

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tinian, and sailed as a missionary to Japan. The plague broke out on board, and he died serving the sick. The sister, Mary, married a lawyer named Roeck, and died, it seems, in extreme poverty. Charles Berchmans became a Jesuit, served as a sort of naval chaplain, underwent many perils for the faith in Friesland, and died placidly at Oudenarde, aged sixty-one. The youngest, Bartholomew, became a soldier, and was lost sight of.

II

We think that anyone looking impartially at the type realized by John Berchmans would say that its salient characteristics were piety and regularity, by which we mean docility to an external rule. In his case a unity of character was effected by the fact that it was his interior piety which dictated his election of and submission to the exterior rule.

We had better say something upon each of these two points.

By piety we do not mean the same thing as virtue. A man or woman may be extremely virtuous without being "pious." And it is far from unknown that a person should be pious without being genuinely virtuous. Thus children, before character is established, or habits formed, are often full of piety; while there is a phase during which most young men, and, nowadays, many girls, combine with real excellence of character and solidly right behaviour a certain shrinking from what may be known as piety. All this is especially observable in Englishmen, who, as a part of their general fear of compromising themselves, are particularly reluctant to wear their religion on their sleeves, so to say, and are, indeed, at

a certain age, and in certain company, quite as anxious to appear worse than they are, as to appear (what most critics, especially if they be foreign, lay to their charge) better than they are.

By virtue, then, we mean a substantial "right behaviour" based on a true judgment of ethical values; while virtues are vital habits—that is, human qualities of established character—and religious virtues are these when they are related, in whatever way, to God. A man who has a clear idea of what Christianity exacts of him as a rule of life, and who definitely intends to obey that rule, and normally does so, is a virtuous man; and this may be compared to fidelity in marriage. Piety, however, includes (as we understand it) the notion of affection, though the idea of *due* affection—*owed* "tendance"—which it originally contained in far greater measure, has perhaps not wholly been eliminated. But, anyhow, natural piety will surround an aged father or mother with a hundred little courtesies and attentions, and with a tender thoughtfulness and delicate homage and charming assiduity in gifts and letters and celebrations, which should be as delightful and grateful to the giver as to the receiver. It may also, on

its side, be compared to the minute and constant worship, to the flowers and trinkets, the imaginative self-offering of courtship. Some happy people remain married lovers all their lives, and they combine the virtue of their state with its fit piety. Religious piety will act thus towards God and the things of God, though its external expression will differ widely with different characters. On the whole it will imply a preoccupation with, and a love for, the "observances" of religion. That love may be the somewhat austere "preference," born simply from long habit; but usually we imply that a certain sweetness is found, by the genuinely pious, in "practices of piety." They will anticipate and outstrip the law. They prefer to obey it than to be dispensed from it. Their thoughts, in such interspace as business or necessary occupations will allow them, swing naturally back towards their magnet. Their conversation instinctively avoids what clashes with what they love, while upon this they willingly discourse; or, again, refuse, with a certain bashfulness or secretiveness, to vulgarize it by speaking of it in public. Such people betray a preference for prayer, an inclination for churches, religious pictures and symbols, a readiness for small self-

denials, a high appreciation of the pomp and ceremony of worship; they almost infallibly surround themselves with a multiplicity of observances which is precisely what, should they not join to their piety the virtues of real unselfishness and absolute and transparent sincerity, has given, in popular parlance, an evil connotation to the very name of "pious."

Now, that John Berchmans was sincere most certainly no one doubts. His pictures are prim, and perhaps to some not overpleasing; but there is a directness in his look, a clearness of forehead and eye which may be described even as impressive. Sincerity, of course, need not interfere with a boy's seeming a prig, but it does prevent his being a hypocrite. There is no absolution for hypocrisy, but priggishness may possibly have something to say for itself, especially if it outgrows itself, which in honest natures it always does. It has ceased to be matter for edification in our eyes when we read of pious boys that they did not play games; in fact they make us rather nervous when they don't. But for a John Berchmans not to have played games* need by no means argue in him priggishness, but it may, with much else

* Though, as a matter of fact, he sometimes did, but more from kindly spirit than taste.

that at the time looked priggish, have been a necessary means of fortifying his own character, of drilling his inclination, of eliminating companionships, conversations, or occasions which he rightly dreaded; and, in fine, there is liberty in all things, and a boy has a perfect right to choose his amusements, or to limit them as he will, subject always to the minimum rule of whatever institute he may have made his own (as of school or college), or to the justifiable advice of age and experience. To these John was always amenable. We have mentioned this because we simply will not admit that our English prejudice in favour of games and against the exterior manifestations of piety is to be allowed to damn for priggishness the pious boyhood of John or of other Saints. Necessarily, we must admit that priggishness essentially includes an element of self-satisfaction, of Pharisaic self-comparison with publicans (usually one's parents, professors, or elders generally, but also one's equals and companions); that if sincerity and unselfishness and modesty be present, what looks like priggish behaviour does not denote a priggish mind, in that it may be part of the ungainly, foal-like methods of immaturity; that it cannot last; that it is not, in reality, to

be called priggishness at all. Having said this, we consider John (of whose unselfishness we shall have to speak afterwards, and of whose sincerity, as we said, no one has ever doubted, so that we may accept it as a premiss) to be absolved from that charge of priggishness which has often been brought against him from those readers of his life whom we shall take the liberty to call superficial and undiscerning. And we shall further at once concede that John was all his life quite conventional, and this, again, dispenses us from any detailed account of his pious practices, as they were, in essence, simply what everybody else did, though more numerous and more intense than the average.

If, however, we have to note down a few points, we shall put in the first place his immense devotion to serving Mass, which he began to do very early.* He afterwards served a Father who spent very long over his Mass, at a moment highly inconvenient to his own studies, for the space of some months; and, again, made himself liable to be called on to serve a priest who could never be sure of saying

* He was quite naturally chosen to fill at Diest the office of priest in the medieval celebration there on the feast of the Innocents. He provided the onlookers with less amusement than was usual, because he performed all his ceremonies without any mistake at all.

Mass at any fixed hour. It may require some imagination if we are to realize how exasperating either of these duties must have been. His "piety" in this case, given his orderly and studious character, cost him dear. His First Communion was a real event to him. It altered his outlook and stimulated new hopes. At the other extreme of God's series of "helps," he found himself immensely taken by Canon Froymont's dog, which the excellent priest used to take out when he went shooting on the marshes round the Dyle. The alert, obedient, untiring, faithful animal, and his devotion to his master, were considered by John to be a fit model for his own service of a Divine Lord. . . . And while the boy was with Froymont, the charm of his piety sufficed to draw a young man named Boels, of Amsterdam, from Calvinism to the Church.

It is quite unnecessary to enter into further details of this part of John's life. His piety was always appropriate to the duties of his day. He worked extremely hard at the business proper to a servant while he was a servant, and at his books when he was at school. He did so well in the first capacity, that whenever the Canons of Mechlin gave a dinner—"I can appeal," says the frank witness, "to every

member of the chapter," though he relentlessly emphasizes Canon d'Ittre and Dean van der Lane—his services were always explicitly required. At his books he did so well that he took prize after prize (and got bullied for it), and already at thirteen wrote a number of Latin verses in the atrocious style beloved by the post-Renaissance *littérateurs*.

But it is clearly our duty here to collect the evidences of John's extreme affection for Our Lady, which grew throughout his life. In a sense this was the inheritance of every Flemish boy, and his devotion has that *homeliness* and robust simplicity which we expect in his nationality, and which differentiates it from Aloysius's rather stately homage, and from Stanislaus's passionate exultation in the brilliance and beauty of his celestial Queen and mother. Constantly in John's letters and notes recurs the name of Mary's sanctuary at Montaigu, where the great pilgrimage church was in his day rising. He fasted often in her honour, and was zealous to say her beads. In the noviciate he still recited daily St. Bonaventure's "Psalter," the Rosary, and the Sodality "Act of Consecration"; he worked to ensure at "recreation" conversation concerning her. Later on, at Rome, he wrote as

a motto, "I am not safe unless I have a true and child-like affection for the Blessed Virgin"; he naïvely attached letters to her pictures; each recurring Saturday he did her special homage; in a large room at the top of the Roman College he walked continually to and fro reciting her Rosary. He put his beads round his neck at night, and invented a new kind of Rosary which he called that of the Immaculate Conception. He collected stories about her, and with a charming sense of appropriateness, dedicated to her especially the cheerful and picturesque excursions of his holidays. He planned, and vowed to write a book in defence of the Immaculate Conception, and did, in fact, register this vow and sign it with his blood on a paper now at Rome. When we relate his death, the same filial and chivalrous devotion will reveal itself. In this we observe a symptom of the fact, that, though John was still a boy, one of the "children" of God's kingdom, he yet felt within himself his nascent manhood, and never at any time of his life was in any degree childish, or "soft," or effeminate. His love for Mary was militant. He wanted to do things for her, as well as say them to her. The defence of her unique position in the scheme of creation preoccupied

him not a little. Even St. Stanislaus did not look so far ahead. He exulted in his mother, and forgot the world. John saw that a perverse and heretical generation was attacking, and would worse attack, the supreme honour of his Lady. He had an immense idea of honour. And a campaign on behalf of Mary was a part of that general campaign for which he was preparing himself.

For from the noviciate onwards John had formed a definite desire of utilizing his powers among heretics, and in particular in the capacity of an army chaplain, as we should say. Of course, his eyes turned to the foreign missions, China especially, where Jesuits were doing the work largely of pioneers. He even planned to spend, at Rome, one year at the English College and another at the German, in order to learn their languages, as in his noviciate he had thoroughly studied French. Of his Italian all bear favourable witness. This thought of working in the perilous lands of the North, and in particular with the immense armies that were then restless in Europe, was still with him on his death-bed. No one will deny that this was a large and virile ambition, and that the means he made use of to prepare himself were wisely planned and balanced.

III

Immediately upon his entering the noviciate at Mechlin, John began that career of minute observance for which he is in hagiography notorious. At once we can have recourse to his notes; and, in his bad handwriting, on marginless scraps of paper as well as in proper note-books, he took notes of literally everything. Not a thought passed through his mind, one would say, but he consigned it to writing; not a resolution, not a scheme, not a like or dislike. It is true to say that his thoughts were simple and ran in the most orderly channels; while affection was strong in him, imagination appears to have been practically non-existent. Similarly his language is absolutely terse and direct. All his life he would have preferred (had he to make a choice) platitude to paradox.

In these notes, then, we at once observe maxims like these: "Die rather than violate the smallest rule;" "Death rather than health at the rule's expense"; *Maximi facere minima.**

* "Treat trifles as treasures." This is no flippant version: he loved jingles. *Sanctitas, sanitas, scientia*: "To be sapient, sane, and a Saint" was a constant prayer of his.

"Be a miser and a merchant in spiritual things"; "Look after the pence," he in equivalent told himself. . . . The entire house-ful of novices, creatures of lynx-eyed virtue, were on the alert to detect in him the slightest deviation from the road of rule. They were unsuccessful. And anyone who knows in how minute a mesh the net of rule or custom (to a novice's mind, the equivalent of rule) captures the existence of a Jesuit novice, or, indeed, in varying fashions, all those student-years which John never outgrew, will appreciate what this means. He slept with his rule-book under his pillow; he planned out his life down to half-hours, and kept his plan; he examined most carefully, before each action, how he had done the last, and how he should do the next; he spent a day each month in self-examination, as well as his bi-annual "Triduums of recollection." On his death-bed he assured his Rector that he had, in fact, broken no single rule deliberately, nor disobeyed any regulation of his Superiors. We could illustrate at great length this characteristic of John's, but the examples we should give would perforce be trivial (in a sense their triviality would be their only point), and meaningless save for one who should interpret his vocation as obliging him

to follow, in the world or in religion, some specifically similar course of life.

Now we are very far from being concerned here to defend the Jesuit rule and training. They can scarcely be judged save by a combination of personal experience and a power of detached criticism which is rare. Moreover they may be differently conceived, interpreted, and applied, according to person, period, and place. But we are very much concerned to defend the legitimacy of such a life as we have hinted in John's own case, and to maintain that he had a perfect right to embrace it in all liberty if he chose.

Three significant facts we would premise. First, John did, as a fact, live in an atmosphere of freedom. All his life he never knew what "scrupulosity" meant. He never clung to one of his minute regulations as to a thing in itself important, but was as ready to tear up his careful plans at the least word of his Superior, and to rearrange an entire schedule of behaviour, as even St. Simeon Stylites was ready, at a hint from his fellow-monks, to come down from his pillar. He was totally free from worries; he started going to bed at a quarter to nine, and was invariably asleep before nine o'clock; he slept without dreams,

and no amount of noise made by whoever shared his room could, when he was told to prolong his sleep, awaken him. It is a curious fact that the more passionate poets have, in almost every age, elected or invented the most complicated metres, as though their vigorous inspiration found no self-expression sufficiently powerful were it not victorious in and over difficulties. As free and supple was John's motion, surrounded by a quickset hedge of duties on which an ordinary wayfarer would in a moment have been impaled.

The next point is, that John was immensely popular. Not the slightest hint that he was stiff, *difficile*, depressing, or censorious (adjectives often hurled at St. Aloysius), is heard in his regard. Van Stiphout loudly lamented John's transference to Froymont, and, indeed, put it down to some personal grudge against himself. "Life has been very bitter to me," he said, "ever since I lost that saintly child." On his journey to Rome he made himself so charming in the various houses he passed through that a number of letters reached his late novice-master, congratulating him on John's successful training. In the international collection of students at the Roman College he became universally beloved, and,

in fact, united such cliques as existed in one general good-fellowship; and the lay-brothers and the sick adored him. His visits to the infirmary were the chief pleasure to which its occupants looked forward, and he paid them, while it was permitted, twice daily—one being always during siesta time, the sacrosanct hour in which the house was lapped in post-prandial repose, while the sick were left to look after themselves during the worst heat of the day.*

What is really implied in this is that John

* Few people spoke or wrote more strongly than John against what are called "particular friendships." It shows how technical is this expression, that no one was a firmer friend, or had more markedly "particular" friends, than John. His closest friend was the Pole, Nicholas Radkaï, who was intimate with him in life, and constant at his death-bed. Nicholas was explaining to him one day that he never went near the Rector, if he could help it, for permissions, "because the Rector has enough to bother him without my adding to it." John, who was clear-sighted, detected that in reality Nicholas had a grudge against the Rector. Nicholas owned to this, but added that he only confessed this to John because of the close friendship between them. "Listen, Nicholas," said John; "we are good friends, but never on that account tell me secrets which I can't speak about if I think I ought to." John kept his liberty, and by his tact persuaded Radkaï to settle things with his Superior and the other person on whose account they had quarrelled that same day.

was through and through unselfish. There was the absolute certainty that never in games, or scholastic displays, or religious conversation, or in his behaviour in general, was John self-seeking, and, complementarily, that he was always absolutely at the disposal of others. It became almost a standing joke with the community that it was John who could be asked to accompany anyone who had to go out, at whatever hour, and however hot it was. He did this several times running on the same day, and never made the least fuss about having his studies interrupted, even when preparing for an imminent examination. Yet it was plodding laboriousness which, rather than genius, should help him (he knew) to success, and he was a miser of moments. In spite of this, it was his delight to assist old, or sick, or merely inconsiderate persons, who annoyed everybody else by their inability to be punctual and their erratic requests for service. He was especially devoted to the lay-brothers, whose uneducated conversation was perhaps trying to the more intellectual of John's *confrères*. They called him the *beato Giovannino*, and worshipped his footsteps.

It is no slight thing to be master of one's life, to be popular without one touch of false com-

plaisance, to be yielding without weakness, to be reliable, single-eyed, and single-hearted.

But we wish to emphasize (though many may think it the less important point) that John had a perfect right to commit himself to a system exactingly minute, and in the eyes of many, tyrannical and coercive. *The original choice was free.* Indeed, he fought hard for freedom to submit himself to that forceful domination of rule. There are those who choose, for reasons that seem to them adequate, the galling etiquette of a court. There are few officers, we imagine, in army or navy, who would advise the total abolition of red tape. Gardeners would be impolite were we to insist, in the interests of liberty, that no carnation should be tied to a stick, no heavy fruit-branch nailed to the brick wall. And it is Mr. Cunninghame Graham, who should know all about liberty, who declares that after the withdrawal of the Jesuit régime from the Paraguay Reductions, the natives had in effect been rendered "free—to starve!" Now, whether or no John was conscious that his character demanded, for its development and establishment, some extremely rigid framework of behaviour, at any rate he took measures which insured his every single action,

word, and even thought being conformed to one deliberately chosen standard, interpenetrated by one motive, and ordered towards one ideal, which he had decided was for him, at any rate, the best.

Now who can fail to see the enormous driving-power with which this supplied him? Every detail of his life conspired to one end; every force converged; it was a triumph of concentration. And not only did he thus create a perfectly regular and homogeneous tendency within his own self, but he identified himself with the immense acquired momentum of the Jesuit Society, and thereby made it his own.

Now, if there is one complaint that anyone interested in education is sure to hear to-day, it is that young men in our time lack ballast, cannot concentrate, cannot stick to their trade, are dilettantes, play with a profession, have no grit, no grip; they have picked up a smattering of many things; they are "all over the place," "don't know what they want," "won't settle down to a thing," and, in general, are the fit target of much slang, mainly American. This invective is, of course, mainly hurled at the public schools, which are said to turn out inefficient, backboneless men, "above

themselves" (snobs, in other words), good accordingly to lapse into work confessedly beneath their abilities and training, presumably in the Colonies. Now a study of St. John Berchmans is manifestly not the place for a disquisition on modern schooling, public or otherwise; only we will say that, whatever amount of truth there may be in the accusation we have outlined, when lodged against a modern boy or young man, this would be totally lacking, if levelled against Berchmans or any young fellow like him, who took up and carried out a "line" such as he did. For sheer tenacity, grip, grit; for singleness of aim and idea; for sledge-hammer driving-power of will, no successful business man of our day need flatter himself he is much ahead of John.

We may very briefly conclude, then, that John, for his very mediocrity of origin, background, and career, was in a sense nearer the common run of men than the meteoric Stanislaus or Aloysius, and therefore more intelligible. His life was based on piety and rule. He never thought he could get on without prayers, and he never fancied he could invent a better rule for the life he had chosen to live than had been laid down by the professionals,

so to call them, in that life. Accordingly he prayed often, and as well as he could, and found joy in prayer, and was " at home in his father's house." And similarly, having once in all freedom chosen to live a Jesuit's life, he did, in fact, lead that life in gross and in detail with courage and loyalty. And therein he passed innocent, but alert and resolute, from childhood to boyhood, and into adolescence. Then God took him.

IV

It remains briefly to tell how a young man of John's intense vitality and limitless hopes was able to die when little more than twenty-two years old.

It is true that the life of acute consciousness John extracted from himself was calculated to file away a constitution of steel or granite ; true also that the total ignorance of how to manage a northerner, which at all times seems to characterize any southern institution, was responsible for much, and in particular for John's own reckless and unchecked behaviour in the Roman summer, spent mostly in the stifling city. He had, in 1621, been reduced from a sturdy young fellow to skin and bones.

But frankly, we believe it to be clear that his definite work was finished, and that his laborious and innocent life deserved a swift reward.

It is curious that while he heads his note-book for 1621 with the words, *Dixi, nunc coepi* ("I have said, now I am beginning . . .") he continues and repeats: "Divine love (*caritas*) is to live from one day to another, and from hour to hour." His thoughts went, by some "homing" instinct, frequently to death; and yet, with almost "modern" spirit, he still concentrated his thoughts on the "*life* of the just," so that without ever brooding over or yearning for the "righteous death," he might implicitly be hourly preparing for it. But minute incidents prepared him explicitly, too, for death. On the last day of July, he drew by lot a motto for August; it was: "Take ye heed! watch and pray, for ye know not the hour . . ." On the 5th he fell slightly ill, and the next day was sent, in a blazing sun, to "attack" in a philosophical disputation at the Greek College, though he had, only a month before, performed his own public defence of "all philosophy," an extremely exhausting task. Next day his fever was high and noticeable to all. The Rector met

him as he was coming to his room, and sent him off to the infirmary. John reminded Father Piccolomini, a future General of the Jesuits, of his month's motto, for he had told him of it when he drew it. "Perhaps *this* is my hour . . . ," he said, in wonder and hope.

The nights passed without sleep, and on Tuesday, the 10th, restoratives had to be administered every four hours. John was supremely calm. He insisted on the room being well aired for his visitors' sake, and submitted in all good grace not to receive Holy Communion, as, save on Sundays, it was not the custom for the sick to have it brought. Father Cepari, the Rector, faced the possibility of a disastrous ending to the sickness. "If Our Lord God should want you in heaven," he said to John, "would anything trouble you ?" John, perfectly unscared or shocked by the question, could think of nothing save a possible ill-feeling between the Belgian and Roman provinces, seeing that his travelling companion was already dead of consumption, and now he, too, was dying. . . . That night, to his intense joy, he was told by the Infirmarian that on the next day he should have Viaticum. Soon after midnight, on the 11th, he dictated a few very brief farewells. At

two o'clock he made a short confession, and at four the Blessed Sacrament was brought, followed by the whole community. "We are off to heaven," he gaily said to his friend Aloysius Spinola, who arrived the first in his room. When he saw before him the Sacred Host he forgot everything else, and with a sudden flame of strength he threw himself upon his knees, and, supported by the arms of his friends, he cried aloud :

"I declare that there is here really present the Son of God the Father Almighty, and of the most Blessed Mary, ever a Virgin.

"I protest that I wish to live and die a true son of our holy Mother, the Catholic Apostolic Roman Church.

"I protest that I wish to live and die a true son of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

"I protest that I wish to live and die a son of the Society." He then received Communion and Extreme Unction.

It was after this that, at the Rector's questioning, he declared that he had deliberately broken no rule nor committed any venial sin since his entry into the Society. He embraced each of the community and then lay still, talking quietly to a few Fathers who remained.

The Rector was saying Mass. John guessed the topic of his prayers. "Father Rector is wrestling for me," he said several times, laughing, "like Jacob." "Father Rector is fighting against me, but he won't win. . . ." The doctors ordered his wrists and forehead to be bathed in wine. "I'm a very expensive patient," said John. "No," said Gaudt, a Flemish fellow-student who was with him, "because this wine is only three years old, and it's age that makes this sort valuable." "Then," said John demurely, "you might pour it out a little faster!" He was visited continuously during the day, and this fatigued him. He struggled against a suggestion that he should vow a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Foye, near Hui, in Belgium, if he should regain his health. He refused flatly at first, and would not touch the pebbles which had been gathered by Van Doorne, a pious priest, near the shrine. Later at night, purely because he feared he had hurt the Father, he made the conditional vow, and then dropped the pebbles like hot coals. His own prayers were simpler, but touched now by a certain almost stern solemnity. "O Mary," he would repeat, "do not disappoint me. I am your child. You know I have sworn to be your child." Even

the next day, Thursday, after smiling at the thought that "the Rector is doing all he can that Our Lord may leave me on earth for the sake of my province"—"but he won't get his way" he added—he reverted to this prayer: "Do not abandon me, Mary; do not deceive me, for I am your child. You know it, for I have sworn it." Paul Oliva, the future General of the Society, urged him not to doubt. "Oh no, I don't doubt, Oliva," he muttered. "Oh no, no, no! I don't doubt." Yet there is a note in these prayers which tells that the child had grown a man, and should endure a man's temptations.

During the day, in spite of all attempted refusals, a flood of distinguished visitors, to whom the unknown scholastic somehow was yet no stranger, insisted on seeing him. "Father Rector must settle that," said he. His only care was that the room be kept fresh and tidy. Indeed, it seems incredible, from our very different standpoints of judgment, that practically the whole houseful of Fathers and brothers, who made a crowd outside his door, were again admitted, and the dying man spoke to each of them.

All joined in one comment, that the simple and diffident boy they had known, now spoke

with an equally simple, but most unmistakable authority, addressing even the oldest, "as one having power."

To van Aelst he said: "I wish all my brother-students to be present at my death to-morrow." "Are you to die to-morrow?" "Yes, about the time when the bell rings for school, or after that." All left him then, save Nicholas Radkaï. Kneeling by John's bed, he implored the dying Saint, his friend, to obtain for him the necessary conquest over that revolt within his flesh and will that no mere vow of purity might eliminate. John promised him he would do so, and gave him what he insisted was his last embrace and his final benediction. He asked to keep a reliquary which Radkaï had lent him, till the end. All thought he would pass that night. Radkaï, who had to leave him, asked, in great distress, if he were sure he could live on till the next morning. John waited a moment, and then said in a raised voice: "Yes, Nicholas. It is certain I shall die to-morrow." "Shall I be present?" asked Nicholas, still in great anxiety. "Try to be," was the brief answer.

It is touching to learn that to the last he felt an antipathy to the Italian custom of wearing a night-cap. He resisted the lay-

brothers in this, and then was troubled. À Lapide, the famous commentator, assured him that no rule exacted that he should wear a night-cap. . . .

But the struggle of infinite issues was near.

When *Ave Maria* rang at half-past seven, he had said to Father Gaudt: "Stay with me to-night, too." "Why, brother?" "Because to-night the whole thing will be decided." "Are you going to die to-night, then?" "No, to-morrow; but to-night I shall have to fight. . . ." And to Father Piccolomini he had said the same thing; and to the Infirmarian, thrice.

At nine o'clock the crowded corridors were once more cleared, and John, overhearing a chance sentence, reiterated (to Piccolomini) that he should not die before morning, and added: "I have asked God one of two graces: either to die on the battle-field, helping the Catholic troops in Flanders, or to die at least in full possession of my faculties, and speaking."

Gaudt, van Doorne, à Lapide, and another fellow-countryman, Alegambe, as well as Spinola and another, stayed up with him. Others remained awake in the next room. At nine o'clock he was full of intense happi-

ness, and was talking, and could not take food for his joy and light-hearted prayers. Again at ten he prayed, asking for the Commendation of the Departing Soul. He tried to sleep and failed; and suddenly, loud and clear, he began to sing the *Ave Maris Stella.* But he soon grew faint. The lay-brother felt his pulse. "Well," said John, "what do you think?" "We are near the end," he said. "We are going! we are going!" he cried to Gaudt, and spoke for a moment with Alegambe of the love of Mary. "If you had a thousand hearts," asked Alegambe, in the fashion of those times, "would you not love her with them all?" "I would love her with them all," he answered, and turned quietly to the wall.

But midnight had passed.

Suddenly John flung himself, panic-stricken, unrecognizable, on to his back in the middle of the bed. He shrieked loudly.

"I will not do it and offend thee, my Lord! Mary, I will never offend thy Son. Never! I will not do it! I would rather die a thousand times, ten thousand times, one hundred thousand times, a million times!" With pale and distorted face he screamed over and over again, "A million times!" He struck out violently

with his arms. "Away, Satan! I do not fear you."

He demanded a rule-book. The copy they gave him lacked the rules for scholastics. They found a complete copy. The paroxysms had passed, but left him with the anxiety of the dying. Restlessly he fingered his book, his Rosary, and his Crucifix. They glittered to his eyes, and he kept exclaiming. He turned over the leaves of the rule-book till he found the formula of his vows. He repeated it solemnly, omitting, however, what was no longer necessary, the clause binding him to "spend his life for ever in the Society."

A Father chanted litanies as John had heard them chanted in the squares of Rome. John thought himself out there, and joined in the chant, and turned the Crucifix this way and that. . . . At the *Parce Domine* he stopped them, and repeated some thirty times: "Spare, O Lord . . .!"

At half-past one his pulse waned. The Rector and some priests were summoned. He repeated with Cepari brief acts: "Lord, I am sorry—I believe—I hope—I love. . . . My heart is ready; O God! my heart is ready. . . ." Then he lost power to speak. But at five o'clock Piccolomini heard him whisper, "*I*

would like to speak," and with violent efforts he pronounced the name *Jesus* again and again, till his speech was clear.

At six Cepari left him, saying: "Do not die till I come back." The Saint promised, but in the interim the struggle recommenced. He tossed wildly about, full of terror. "I did not do it willingly! I did not will it! Come home, come home!" Piccolomini bent over him: "John," he said, "listen to me. Say nothing but what I shall say. 'I believe, my Lord; I hope, my Lord; I love, my Lord.'" John repeated the words vacantly. Then, raising one hand, he shrieked again: "Let us go home! I did not mean to do it. Let us go home!" "John," said the priest earnestly, "you have always been obedient; be so now: say nothing but what I say." This time the dying man was pacified.

At half-past six he asked for the Rector. Litanies of the Saints and of Our Lady were said. John repeated each name or title, struggling till he could pronounce it, and raising his head and bowing at the words *Holy Virgin of Virgins, Queen of Virgins, Mother most chaste.*

And on the anniversary of Mary's death, at eight o'clock, August 13, 1621, holding in his

hands his rule-book, his Rosary, and his Crucifix, uttering the names of Jesus and Mary, he passed into peace.

* * * * *

It will now be seen that we have in no sort of way attempted to write "lives" of the three young Saints of whom we have spoken, though we desire nothing more earnestly than that such "lives" should competently be written. We have wished simply to recall—and that in no detail nor with elaborated comment—some few ascetical considerations connected with their histories upon which the readers of this series, or the members of Our Lady's Sodality, may care to reflect. We have seen that in each case the choice between two kinds of lives was set before a human mind and will, and that in each case the choice, though often in conditions of great hardship, was made in favour of that life which took into account eternal issues and the teaching of Christ. Each of these Saints said to himself in effect: "I am a Christian. What does that mean? and what must I do in consequence?" Each of them decided to take Christianity in its fullest sense, and to shoulder all the consequences. Each of them, with greater or less violence, had to separate

himself from much that at first surrounded him; each found (what not all, of course, will find) that he must join himself to a new and definite society. None of them flinched in this uprooting, nor in this transplanting. They flourished and put forth flowers and fruit each after his kind. In Aloysius we saw that his life consciously included a great preoccupation with sin; it fastened its attention on sin's great consequence, Christ's Passion, and on the supreme pledge of full Redemption, the Eucharist. We saw how his life was governed by, and issued into, the love of God Himself. In Stanislaus the radiant privilege of an innocence that almost could transcend the thought of sin arrested us. We perceived, however, that not for that, and not for all his exquisite affection for a celestial mother, was he to be exempt from treading a stern path; and we watched him follow it, singing for joy and courage. In John Berchmans we saw the normal Christian life taken, as it were, for granted, and the sturdy stock of piety putting forth simple flowers that no one may dare deride. We saw him choose an end, observe the means to gain it, and with persevering fidelity make use of none but them, and all of them.

We saw in Aloysius, Stanislaus, and John a life of purity kept flawless, and of hard work done; and we saw the peaceful death of each of these young men.

We have known each and all of them to be misinterpreted, misjudged, and condemned. We believe that this has been explicable and pardonable, but that it must not be suffered to be laid truly to our own charge. Indeed, we are not timorous to say that we venerate these Saints, and are ashamed before them; that we are helped by them, and thank them; that we love them, and think with tenderness of the shadows on their beauty. For we see them to have been men like ourselves; and unlike ourselves to have been heroes; we see between them and ourselves a likeness which does not belittle them, and an unlikeness that need not depress us. We commend our lives to their prayers, knowing that they see better than we God's will in our regard, and trusting that they will ask from Him that light and strength which we still lack for its fulfilment.

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